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townclerk@newromneytc.co.uk

INTRODUCTION FROM THE MAYOR



A warm welcome to this Annual Town Meeting of New Romney Town Council. This meeting provides the Council with an opportunity to report on the achievements of the Council over the past year. There have been many, and I am proud to be leader of such a dedicated team of Councillors and Staff. Together, we have progressed several key initiatives – most particularly the development of the proposed new Sports Pavilion and Community Hall – with the appointment of a highly regarded architect and project management team tasked with supporting the Council in taking this much needed project forward. There have been a range of issues – some of which are beyond the ‘normal’ remit of a first tier local authority – that have been the subject of discussion and action. Where a matter affects our local Community my Council has stepped forward. It is, without doubt – a caring local authority that aims to represent the best interests of the community it serves.

As Mayor, of this Ancient Cinque Port Town I have been keen to promote the area and act as Ambassador for both the Town and Romney Marsh. There have been many highlights. From attending a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace and spending a day at sea aboard the Royal Navy Frigate – HMS Kent, to opening both the New Romney Country Fayre and the new slipway at the Varne Boat Club. Likewise, the formal blessings of the new ‘New Romney Remembrance Garden’ furniture on Civic Sunday & Remembrance Sunday are of particular note. This was a collaborative project, overseen by the Council that brought together a range of individuals and organisations for a single cause – to renovate this very important area at the heart of our Town whilst highlighting the importance of “Respectful Remembrance”. I have been guest speaker at two Kent Association of Local Council Conferences – and was provided with the opportunity to speak to delegates from across Kent about the work of New Romney Town Council and its plans for the future.

My Council has been proactive in encouraging inward investment too. Following months of research it submitted an application to the Department for Communities and Local Government to secure £10,000 grant funding to form a Coastal Community Team and develop a Socio-Economic Plan for the Town that will provide a path to success for New Romney for the next 20 years. Council representatives also worked closely with Shepway District Council officers to secure grant funding from Magnox to help support some of the projects in the plan. These are exciting times for our Town.

My mantra this past Civic Year has been to act with “Courage, Caring, Creativity and Competence”. My four chosen charities reflect that – with the Salvation Army representing Courage, Demelza House Hospice representing Caring, JAM on the Marsh representing Creativity and New Romney Sea Cadets representing Competency. All worthy causes that have a positive impact on the local Community

Finally, I would like to thank my Deputy Mayor, Councillor Peter Coe and my fellow Councillors for their dedication and support. We may not all agree all of the time but we are without doubt, moving forward in a positive manner. It is also my duty and my pleasure to express thanks to the Town Clerk, her Staff and my Mayoral Chaplain, Reverend Julie Coleman, for all that they have done to support the work of the Council this past year.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor Mrs Patricia Rolfe

TOWN COUNCIL SUCCESS STORIES

Once again, this has been a very busy and productive year, with continued and strenuous campaigning by the Town Council on a range of topics, further improvements to the locality for the benefit of residents, large-scale projects progressing well and numerous strategic and community plans under development. As always, there is too much to mention within a single report, however, during the past year there have again been a number of successes that are definitely worthy of highlighting:

- **ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL!**

Campaign for Improved NHS Provision on the Romney Marsh – Update

New Romney Town Council has, since August 2015, been leading the campaign for improved Health Service Provision in New Romney and across Romney Marsh. The Council voted to send a letter to the then Secretary of State for Health – Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP to highlight the issue of rural discrimination in health service provision and note its concerns about local services – notably the lack of local GP's and the failure of SECamb who provide Ambulance services to meet their designated targets. The Council listened to the concerns of local residents by highlighting key areas where local service provision has fallen short of 21st Century expectations.

During the past year, Councillor Rolfe has chaired several meetings in New Romney with a range of managers from health care providers including NHS England, the SKC CCG, and SECamb with the aim to bring the various bodies together to focus on the situation that the Marsh, and many other rural areas face. One of the key aims of the campaign has been to highlight the need for a new walk-in Health Centre in New Romney to service the Romney Marsh area. This has been included in the Local Places and Policies Plan that is under review by Shepway District Council, and mentioned in the New Romney Socio-Economic Plan that has recently been developed by the New Romney Coastal Community Team.

Town Council representatives are maintaining an ongoing dialogue with service providers to feed into discussions about the future of local healthcare provision and will continue to do so as it strives to represent the needs of the Town and its residents.

Campaign for Increased Free and Long-Stay Parking

Following comments received from local residents regarding the lack of long-stay parking in the vicinity of the High Street and the inability to access an on-street parking space in order to visit High Street retail outlets, the Town Council consulted with local traders to seek their views regarding High Street parking restrictions and length of stay restrictions in West Street Car Park. The afore-mentioned consultation resulted in a very positive response from local Traders, who concurred with the views of local residents that availability of longer-stay parking provision within the High Street vicinity was inadequate. As a result, the Town Council requested that Shepway District Council consider extending on-street parking restrictions in the High Street to allow a stay of 2 hours as opposed to the then current 1 hour restriction and to re-designate West Street Car Park as a long-stay car park in order that both local residents and visitors to the area could benefit from adequate parking provision to be able to make the most of what the High Street has to offer.

Following successful negotiation with the District Council, extension of High Street parking restrictions from 1hr to 2hrs along the length of the High Street and re-designation of the West Street Car Park as a long-stay car park was approved, as per New Romney Town Council's request.

Campaign for Improved Local Cemetery Provision

Following over a year of negotiations, New Romney Town Council has recently secured around 50 additional grave plots within the Town's cemetery, together with 28 new 'larger' ashes plots that will enable headstones to be placed on each area should people so wish.

Lengthy negotiations commenced with an initial meeting that took place back in 2015. Since that time, there have been ongoing discussions between the Town and District Councils which culminated in a site meeting on Friday 20th January 2017 involving the Mayor and Town Clerk, together with District Council Officers; the aim of the site meeting being to work out the practicalities of delivering the much needed additional plots in light of the fact that the lack of grave provision in New Romney and the wider Romney Marsh has been a significant concern to residents and the Town Council for some time. These negotiations have resulted in the delivery of a short-term solution that will enable those who so wish to be buried on the Marsh and will also allow people access to some 'larger' ashes plots.

It is noted that a longer term solution to the lack of cemetery provision on the Marsh still needs to be sought. All Parish and Town Councils, as well as the District Council, are aware that it is a major concern for many people, particularly in an area such as Romney Marsh where there is an ageing demographic. The recently constituted 'Romney Marsh Forum' – whose membership includes at least 7 Marsh based Councils - have identified it as one of the issues it would like to address. The high water table in the area and the implementation of new environmental legislation are key obstacles that will need to be overcome. Meanwhile, New Romney Town Council is very pleased that its negotiations have been successful in securing an interim solution.



- **FUNDING SUCCESS**

Coastal Community Team and Socio-Economic Plan

The Town Council recently celebrated the success of two funding bids that would enable it to progress the development of a Socio-Economic Plan for the Town. The Department for Communities and Local Government awarded the Town Council £10,000 to facilitate the creation of a new Coastal Community Team which will be tasked with developing a Socio-Economic Plan for the area. A further joint application submitted in partnership with Shepway District Council to Magnox for £5,000 to part fund the development of the Plan was also successful and, together, the grant monies totalling £15,000 will enable the Team to both create the Plan and fund or part fund one or two of the projects that are likely to emerge during the process.

Coastal Community Team funding provided an opportunity to bring together some proactive representatives from a number of existing and emerging organisations and partnerships that are linked to or based in New Romney. Through their initial meetings, the Coastal Community Team, chaired by Councillor Patricia Rolfe and involving a wide range of local representatives, has already been able to share their local knowledge, experience and expertise to produce a common, shared plan to inspire and engage the local community. The plan sets out a clear programme of realistic and useful actions to help develop the huge potential (linked to tourism or otherwise) of this very special and historically unique area – both for now and for the future, ensuring that New Romney is perceived as a positive place to live, work and visit.

On 10th March this year, a very successful Public Awareness Event was held at The Assembly Rooms, New Romney, to highlight the range of projects and initiatives that were being proposed by the New Romney Coastal Communities Team for inclusion in the new Socio-Economic Plan for the Town.

Members of the public were able to assess and comment on the priority projects as well as a range of wider projects that were being proposed over the next 10 year period. From early “quick visible wins’ – to short, medium,

long and longer term “Blue Sky’ goals. Projects included the development of a new Community Hall & Sports Pavilion, a High Street Regeneration initiative, a new Cinema for the Town, significant but

sympathetic enhancement of the amenity offer along the Coastal strip and a drive to support the existing arts festivals and events such as JAM on the Marsh and the Country Fayre as well as develop new ones – such as a food-related festival. Infrastructure issues were also considered, such as a new ‘walk-in health centre’ and improved transport links. Team members and the consultants from Regeneris were on hand to talk to residents and answer questions. Following the Public Awareness Event the final draft of the Socio-Economic Plan was duly submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).



The Right Worshipful the Mayor of New Romney, Councillor Patricia Rolfe recently attended the launch of the Coastal Culture Network at the Houses of Parliament as well as the National Coastal Community Teams Conference in Hull. The formation of the New Romney Coastal Community Team is already opening a number of doors and a key aim of the Team will be to encourage investment in the local area.

- **IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LOCALITY**

New Romney Garden of Remembrance



Over the past year, New Romney Town Council has co-ordinated the fundraising and renovation of New Romney’s Garden of Remembrance in Church Approach. The project promotes the principle of “Respectful Remembrance” – that, in learning lessons from our past, we should all aim, in our daily lives, to respectfully serve others and, ever more importantly, to strive for unity in our society.

The project, which has seen the installation of a range of remembrance themed furniture installed, including three benches, a lectern bearing a quotation from the Town Mayor’s 2015 Remembrance Speech and a matching bin, has pulled many individuals, organisations and businesses together and New Romney Town Council is grateful to all those who have funded the new themed memorial furniture. Each has made a difference by contributing to the renovation of this very special area within the heritage heart of New Romney.

The Town Council took a holistic approach to the design in the area to ensure that the design and placement of individual items work in harmony. It is an exemplary example of Partnership Working and has effectively brought people together to work for a common cause – a clear message of unity within our community. It is hoped that all those who visit this newly renovated area, both now and in future years, will find it to be a place for quiet contemplation and reflection as well as a simply pleasing place to sit and take time out.

Negotiations have also been in-hand in respect of the transfer of freehold title of the Garden of Remembrance from Shepway District Council to New Romney Town Council and this matter is currently nearing a very successful conclusion.



IMPROVING LOCAL PLAY & LEISURE FACILITIES



Recreation Ground.

It's *'All Aboard the New Romney Express!'* as New Romney Town Council continues its programme of maintaining and improving play and leisure facilities for the children and young people of New Romney Town and Coast Wards. This year, the old yellow parallel bars have been removed from the recreation ground, having reached the end of their serviceable life. The area has been renovated and re-turfed and a shining, bright 'New Romney Express' - pictured on the left - has just been installed. The installation of this beautiful new feature represents phase one of a 'two-phase' capital project – which, it is hoped (with the assistance of some successful bids for grant funding), will see the installation at Fairfield Road Recreation Ground of a new two-bay swing set for New Romney's older children and teenagers, together with a further item of play equipment for local toddlers. The Town Council has also, this year, completed repairs to surface cracks to the extremely popular skatepark at Fairfield Road

COMMUNITY HALL / SPORTS PAVILION UPDATE



New Romney Town Council is very pleased to be able to report the immense level of progress that the Community Hall / Sports Pavilion project has made this past year – so much so that the project is now well under way. During the 2016-17 civic year, the Town Council appointed a professional Project Management Team and, having already engaged in preliminary consultation via a Stakeholder Group, the Town Council then also engaged in a large-scale public consultation delivered by Royal Mail to all residential and business addresses within the TN28 postcode. The data collated from the aforementioned consultation evidenced resounding support for this major project

and provided the information required to ensure that, going forward, the provision within the new facilities would reflect the needs and wishes of the local community.

The first formal meeting of 2017 heralded a positive start for New Romney Town Council, with Council Members voting unanimously to appoint award winning Guy Hollaway Architects to lead the design and development of the purpose built new Community Hall and Sports Pavilion. With the professional support of Project Management Consultancy – Synergy LLP, an architects' competition was run based on a brief that took into account information collected through public consultation. Following a rigorous assessment and interview process, the Project Steering Group led by the Town Mayor, Councillor Patricia Rolfe, recommended to Councillors that the experience, expertise and initial concept design presented by Guy Hollaway and his team was the preferred option.

The Town Council's Community Hall / Sports Pavilion Steering Group has now begun the process of engaging in a series of design meetings with its appointed architect and project management team, reporting regularly to the Full Council as the project progresses. It is now also commencing investigations into potential grant-funding sources in order that, at the appropriate stage - when a fully costed design has been developed and a detailed long-term business plan prepared, it will be in a position to undertake the huge task of large-scale fund-raising to assist in bringing this project to fruition.

Please be reminded that further public consultation is likely to be required 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 Town Council can deliver a new Community Hall and Sports Pavilion that can truly reflect the needs of the local Community.

GRANT FUNDING SUPPORT

During 2016-17, New Romney Town Council has awarded grant funding as follows:

St. Martin's Field Charity	-	£2,750.00
New Romney Old School Trust	-	£150.00
IMOS Foundation	-	£250.00
New Romney Sea Cadets	-	£200.00
New Romney Country Fayre	-	£350.00

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 2016-17, the following events took place at The Greens:

- 1x Funfair
 - 1x 10K Run hosted by RNLI
 - 1x Emergency Services Day hosted by RNLI
 - 1x Circus
 - 1x Shepway District Council Pop Up Environmental Awareness Event
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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, please go to the Town Council website: www.newromneytc.co.uk

or contact Ms Anne Williams (Amenities Clerk) at the Town Hall.

Email: amenitiesclerk@newromneytc.co.uk Tel: 01797 362348



CHURCH LANE ALLOTMENTS



The Town Council has, this year, completed substantial remedial works to the culvert under the vehicular entrance to Church Lane Allotment Gardens, which were required to ensure the continued flow of water between the two ditches adjacent Church Lane and improve drainage at the Allotment Gardens.

Following lengthy liaison with the relevant allotment gardens tenants and, having provided much support to enable all health and safety requirements to be met, the Town Council was able to formally approve

the installation of a beehive at the Allotments Gardens Site and the bees are now reported to be thriving and successfully multiplying.

The Town Council also granted permission for an additional small wheelbarrow store to be constructed at the Mountfield end of the Allotment Gardens, subject to site visit to identify and agree a suitable location and maximum size, for improved ease of use of shared equipment by Allotment Garden Tenants.

The Allotment Gardens Tenancy Agreement was, this year, fully reviewed and completely revised in order that, going forward and to avoid confusion, all tenancies will be subject to the same terms and conditions.

If you are interested in renting an allotment garden plot or for further information, please go to the Town Council Website: www.newromneytc.co.uk

or contact Ms Anne Williams (Amenities Clerk) at the Town Hall.

Email: amenitiesclerk@newromneytc.co.uk Tel: 01797 362348

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 2016-17, served as Representatives on Outside Bodies, as follows:

Organisation	Town Council Representative
Steward for Damian Collins MP	Cllr Mrs E Gould
Town / Coast Ward Councillor Surgery Attendants	Cllr Miss J Hiscock, Cllr Mrs P Metcalfe
Emergency Contacts for Shepway District Council	The Mayor – Cllr Mrs P S Rolfe, Deputy Mayor – Cllr P J Coe
Floodline Contacts for Environment Agency	Cllr Ms P Snoad, Cllr Miss J M Hiscock
Kent Association of Local Councils	Cllr P J Coe, Cllr M J O'Neill
Lydd Airport Consultative Committee	Cllr P J Coe, Cllr D Lawton, Cllr A Rodriguez
Dungeness Site Stakeholder Group	Cllr A Rodriguez, Cllr D Lawton, Cllr P J Coe
NHS / South Kent Coast Clinical Commissioning Group	Cllr Mrs P Rolfe
Romney Marsh Network	Cllr Mrs E Gould
Southlands Almshouse Trust	Cllr P J Coe, Cllr Mrs E Gould, Cllr M J O'Neill
Confederation of Cinque Ports	The Mayor – Cllr Mrs P S Rolfe, Deputy Mayor – Cllr P J Coe, Town Clerk – Mrs C Newcombe
Romney Marshes Area Internal Drainage Board	Cllr P J Coe
Environment Agency	Cllr P J Coe
New Romney Allotment Association	Cllr Miss J M Hiscock, Cllr A Rodriguez

Romney Marsh Forum	The Mayor – Cllr Mrs P S Rolfe, Cllr Miss J M Hiscock
Mayoral Representative	No permanent representative – appointed as and when required at the discretion of the Mayor

COUNCILLOR SURGERIES:

Regular Monthly Surgeries are held for 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 2016-17, as follows:

Town Ward and Coast Ward:

The Assembly Rooms, Church Approach, New Romney

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

NB: Despite this surgery provision being in place to accommodate the District Councillors for New Romney Town and Coast Wards, no District Councillor has attended any of the afore-mentioned Surgeries during the past year – albeit that Councillor Govett has made alternative arrangements to liaise with local residents and continues to work very pro-actively alongside the Town Council.

COUNCILLOR DETAILS

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

There are currently thirteen Town Councillors, as follows:

Town Ward:

The Right Worshipful the Mayor - Cllr Mrs P S Rolfe
 Councillor Mrs E Gould
 Councillor M J O'Neill
 Councillor A Rodriguez
 Councillor R Tillson
 Councillor Mrs B Lonbay Kapoor

Coast Ward:

Deputy Mayor – Councillor P J Coe
 Councillor Miss J M Hiscock
 Councillor D Lawton
 Councillor Mrs P Metcalfe
 Councillor D L Evans
 Councillor Ms P Snoad
 Councillor D Stedham

For information about the work of a local council and the role of a councillor and for details about how to apply to become a Town Councillor, please visit the Town Council website: www.newromneytc.co.uk

Alternatively, please contact the Town Clerk:

townclerk@newromneytc.co.uk Tel: 01797 362348

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2016/17 Budget Analysis

The Town Council's revenue budget for the year 2016/17 is on target to balance, with an anticipated expenditure and income, each comprising £187,170.00. The cost of New Romney Town Council's services for a

Band D property for the financial year was £61.51 equating to £1.18 per week, which was a very small increase against the previous year, which was in the amount of £1.09 per week.

The Town Council's Precept for the year 2017/18 in the amount of £222,797.00 represents a cost of £84.72 for New Romney Town Council's services for a Band D property for the year – a total annual increase of £23.24, equating to £1.63 per week, which is a small increase of £0.45 per week against the previous year, despite continued increases in costs to the Town Council, the progression of numerous capital projects and strategic / community plans and the on-going financial impact of new auto-enrolment legislation, which is still bedding in.

Analysis of Proposed Income and Expenditure for 2017/18

<u>Income</u>	£
New Romney Town and Coast Tax Payers	222,797
Local Council Tax Support Grant Allocation	0
Hire of Land and Properties	12,740
Allotment Rents	900
Hut & Winch Site Rents	5,000
Other Income	610
Total Income	<u>242,047</u>

Expenditure

Amenities Committee	
Sports Field and Maude Pavilion	2,745
Fairfield Road Recreation Ground	3,700
The Greens	4,030
Flagstaff Land	1,075
Allotment Gardens	1,700
Land at Coney Banks	50
Town Square	80
Assembly Rooms	6,870
Community Hall	1,045
Garden of Remembrance	500
Other	1,300
Reserve Fund Contributions	8,300
Personnel Panel	97,142
Finance & General Purposes Committee	
Town Hall	11,780
Town Hall House	1,180
Insurances	9,000
Legal & Professional Fees	20,000
Donations	4,500
Subscriptions	3,000
Office Equipment	2,000
Computer Maintenance	750
Phone/Internet	1,400
Printing & Stationery	2,500
Public Clock	300
Postage and Petty Cash	1,800
Admin & Miscellaneous (inc. Mayor's/Civic Allowance)	7,750
Bank Charges	700
Town Sprucer Scheme	1,500
Payroll Outsourcing	1,100
Reserve Fund Contributions	24,000
Contingency	20,000
Planning Committee	<u>250</u>

Total Expenditure **242,047**

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 2015/16 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.

