



www.newromneytc.co.uk

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INTRODUCTION FROM THE MAYOR



Welcome to this Annual Town Meeting of New Romney Town Council. The past year has been a busy and proactive year for Council and I am proud to be leader of such a dedicated team of Councillors and Staff. A number of key initiatives, such as the development of the proposed new Community Hall, have been progressed and important issues, such as Health Service provision and the unfortunate closure of the Natwest Bank that affect the socio-economic wellbeing of the Community within New Romney and across the Marsh, have been highlighted.

My mantra this past Civic Year has been to act with "Courage and Kindness" and hopefully that has proved true. As Mayor of this historic Cinque Port I feel honored to be given the opportunity to act as Ambassador for the Town, meeting and greeting many dignitaries from across Kent, East Sussex and London, sharing information and hopefully making new friends for the Town. The Town's rich heritage is an asset and the recent revelation that Shakespeare may have visited New Romney with the King's Players in 1609 and 1612 provides another chapter in the varied and interesting story

of New Romney's history. The Council respectfully acknowledges the Town's past, whilst its Members continue to be forward looking in our plans for managing and developing the town's amenities and protecting the best interests of the local electorate.

I have been pleased to be a member of the Confederation of the Cinque Ports Promotion Working Group and we are proactively researching projects and initiatives that may help promote each member Town.

Romney Marsh is known as 'The Fifth Continent' and so, to reflect that, I chose 5 charities that directly benefit the local area and that cover a range of interests:

New Romney Sea Cadets, New Romney Scouts, Friends of St Nicholas Church, JAM on the Marsh and the Romney Marsh Day Centre. All worthy causes that impact positively on the local Community.

Finally I would like to thank my Deputy Mayor, Councillor Peter Coe, for his help this past year, my fellow Councillors for their dedication and for their support and it is both my duty and pleasure to express particular thanks to the Town Clerk, her Staff and my Mayoral Chaplain, Reverend Julie Coleman, for all they have done to support the work of the Council this past Civic Year.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor Mrs Patricia Rolfe

TOWN COUNCIL SUCCESS STORIES

As advised last year, 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 again been a number of successes that are worthy of highlighting:

- **ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL!**

Campaign for Improved NHS Provision on the Romney Marsh

New Romney Town Council has led the much publicised campaign to improve Health Service provision across Romney Marsh. In so doing, the Council has been responding to the concerns of many residents who highlighted the problems faced by the medical service providers and consequently their patients. These issues will only get worse as further housing developments impact on our basic infrastructure. There are fears that lives are being put at risk due to the weak local transport infrastructure, poor SECAmb response times combined with the closure of the medical centre in Dymchurch. New Romney Town Council representatives have been lobbying, during this past year, for an improved 24/7 walk in Health Centre on Romney Marsh and have sought the support of the Secretary of State for Health- the Right Hon Jeremy Hunt MP and our local MP – Damian Collins.

The Council is currently in direct discussion with key representatives of the South Kent Coastal Clinical Commissioning Group and in the process of setting up a meeting with management of NHS England as part of an ongoing dialogue that aims to deliver a First Class - not Third World - service to the local electorate. It is a pleasure to report that the campaign is supported and endorsed by the newly constituted Marsh Forum that represents the majority of Councils across Romney Marsh

Fighting to Retain Key Services

In October, the news of the impending closure of the local Natwest Bank sent shock waves through the Community. New Romney is designated as a Rural Service Hub and the loss of such a key service has been felt across the area. The Council petitioned the Chancellor – Rt Hon George Osborne and submitted strong objections to the management of the Bank. A claim for compensation was also submitted to the Financial Ombudsman and the Mayor met with the South East Regional Director of the Bank in an attempt to prevent the closure. Despite all these efforts the Bank closed in November. Whilst that battle was lost, it is important for residents to know that the Council will do all it can to protect the best interests of the local electorate because its Members care about the Community.

High Street Lighting

It was reported last year that following the installation of new street lighting columns in the High Street, 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.

It can now be reported that a meeting was subsequently held with KCC Officers and engineers, following which new lamps were fitted to the columns. Arrangements were then put in hand for a further meeting with representatives of the Town Council, together with a KCC officer and engineers, at which time the street lights were re-aligned, thereby creating a much improved level of lighting in the High Street. Thanks go to the KCC officers and engineers concerned for an expedient and successful exercise.

- **IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LOCALITY**

Adoption of Memorial to the Fallen

New Romney Town Council was delighted, this year, to be invited by New Romney Friends of the Royal British Legion to accept the new 'Memorial to the Fallen' in Church Approach on behalf of the Town of New Romney. The local supporters of the Royal British Legion had worked tirelessly to bring this project to fruition through fund-raising and negotiating with numerous parties, even down to sourcing the best type of rock for the memorial. It was, in the end, the close Partnership Working between New Romney Royal British Legion Members, New Romney Town Council and Shepway District Council that resulted in finalisation of all the legal and other issues that may have otherwise been real barriers to the success of this very worthwhile project which was, at the dedication ceremony in September 2015, so well received by local residents.

Town Hall Notice Boards

Having had to manage, for several years now, the display of Town Council information which it is bound by legislation to display publicly in a very old, damp noticeboard at the Town Hall and the Town Hall window, both of which have been very prone to severe condensation, making it almost impossible, at times, to read the information displayed therein, the Town Council undertook to provide two new notice boards in the Town Council adopted corporate design. Whilst it had originally been intended that the new notice boards be attached to the frontage of the Town Hall either side of the main entrance, due to the negative feedback received from the District Council Conservation Officer, it was not possible to do so. Thus, in the spirit of Partnership Working yet again, the Town Council worked closely with Kent County Council – and more specifically Kent Highways – to secure approval for the siting of two free-standing notice boards within the footpath either side of the Town Hall entrance. The Town Council is very pleased that the new notice boards have been successfully installed and all Town Council information that is publicly displayed can now be very clearly viewed.

IMPROVING LOCAL PLAY & LEISURE FACILITIES



New Romney Town Council continues, as always, to work on maintaining and improving play and leisure 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 new 'Tom Thumb' multi-play unit at Fairfield Road Recreation Ground to replace the old wooden fort which had come to the end of its useful life and was, therefore, removed for health and safety reasons. Furthermore, following completion of the installation of the new Outdoor Gym at The Greens, Littlestone, and the previously installed new children's playground adjacent, the planned re-siting of a toddlers' sheep rocker at Fairfield Road Recreation Ground, together with two wooden shelters / play houses and the teenage multi-gym, thereby increasing provision for both toddlers and teenagers in the Town Ward, has now been successfully undertaken. In addition to this, work is in hand to repair surface cracks to the skatepark at Fairfield Road Recreation Ground, which, the Council has been

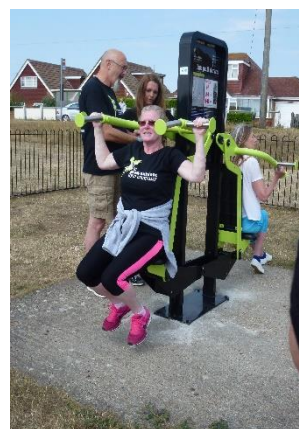
advised, have been caused by settlement – an occurrence that is deemed to be quite usual in such a structure.

The Town Council also put a great deal of energy, during the past year, into lobbying the District Council to set in place a Public Places Protection Order (PSPO) in respect of Fairfield Road Recreation Ground which would ban dogs from the area for the health and safety of New Romney's children and young people – a matter that has now been brought to a successful conclusion, thanks to a great deal of perseverance and, in the end, good partnership working between the Town and District Council. This measure was required to protect the health and safety of New Romney's children and young people by preventing continued instances of dog fouling in this area where children and young people play and dog urination against children's play equipment, which is then touched by toddlers and young children. Furthermore, the measure was required to prevent any risk of a local child being bitten by a dog whilst playing in this area.

Talks have recently taken place between the Town Council and Affinity Water regarding the poor condition of the area of the Station Road sports field through which the new water main had been laid. A site visit was arranged by the Town Council, at which time the relevant issues were raised and discussed with representatives of Affinity Water. The Town Council is currently awaiting further communication from Affinity Water regarding any steps that will now be taken to improve the condition of the afore-mentioned strip of the sports field.

HEALTH AND FITNESS FOR ALL

During 2015, the Town Council brought to fruition the installation of an outdoor gym facility at The Greens, Littlestone – having first undertaken public consultation and having been successful in bidding for grant funding via The Big Lottery Fund which, together with funds allocated via the Town Council's Capital Spending Plan, made this project possible. In another example of good partnership working between the Town and District Council, the perimeter fencing was generously funded by Shepway District Council to complete and enhance this Town Council project. The Outdoor Gym, which is sited within a newly fenced area adjacent the children's play area at The Greens, has provided a range of health and exercise equipment for all adults from 14 years and over right through to senior citizens. The Town Council is very pleased to note that, since installation, the Outdoor Gym has attracted a steady stream of users and it is hoped that with its first full summer season approaching, it will be enjoyed by many more users as tourists and visitors to the area discover this wonderful, inclusive facility which has been designed to encourage healthy outdoor physical activity in a fun, friendly, social environment.



COMMUNITY HALL / SPORTS PAVILION UPDATE

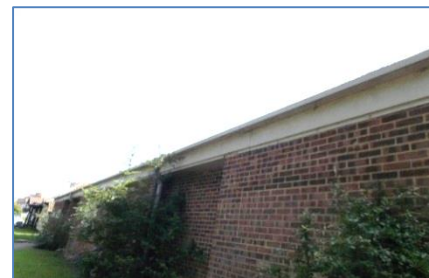


Since being previously reported, the Town Council has continued working on the preliminary stages of the immense project to provide a new Community Hall and Sports Pavilion - for which £630,000.00 was set aside within the Town Council's Capital Spending Plan, with the necessity to seek match-funding to achieve the build.

During the past year, with initial consultations having been concluded and the resulting data collated, a clearer picture of what such a build should provide in terms of overall facilities has now emerged. This information will be very important in informing the design process at the appropriate stage. The Town

Council has also now appointed a formal Steering Group which will guide this project forward, reporting regularly and making recommendations to the Full Council as the project progresses.

As the Town Council is now moving towards the initial design stage of this project, it is necessary to begin to incur professional costs and an initial budget up to a maximum amount of £50,000 has, therefore, been allocated from the capital sum with which to appoint an architect and / or professional project management team – a matter which is currently being investigated by the Steering Group, with a view to reporting back to the Town Council as soon as possible with any recommendations as to the preferred direction in which to move forward. Once the Council is in the position of having appointed the necessary professional(s) and an appropriate, costed design has been developed, it will need to draft a detailed long-term business plan and undertake the huge task of large-scale fund-raising, the success of which will be key to bringing this project to fruition.



Please be reminded that 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 2015-16, New Romney Town Council has awarded grant funding as follows:

| | | |
|--|---|-----------|
| St. Martin's Field Charity | - | £2,000.00 |
| HiKent (Hearing Impaired Kent) | - | £100.00 |
| Victim Support | - | £100.00 |
| CARM (Caring Altogether on Romney Marsh) | - | £150.00 |
| New Romney Country Fayre | - | £350.00 |
| New Romney Allotment Association | - | £50.00 |

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 2015-16, the following events took place at The Greens:

- 1x Boot Fair
 - 1x Funfair
 - 1x 10K Run hosted by RNLI
 - 1x Emergency Services Day hosted by RNLI
-

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



New Romney Town Council is pleased to report that, having now completed all necessary works to provide an additional 6 plots (plans for which were reported last year), it now provides a total of 37 allotment garden plots in a range of sizes at its Church Lane Allotment Gardens. The Council has also funded the installation of a pedestrian access gate to allow access from the Mountfield Industrial Estate and increase options for car-parking in close proximity of the Allotment Gardens. Since completion of the installation of security fencing along three of the site's boundaries, linking up with new rear

garden fencing to the fourth boundary, there have been no reports of break-ins, vandalism or any other incidences at the Church Lane Allotment Gardens.

As previously reported, 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. This management plan was implemented during 2014/15 and is now in its second year. Having, this year, sought advice regarding the poor condition of the culvert under the vehicular entrance to the Allotment Gardens and the lack of water flow between the ditches either side of the entrance, it was apparent that substantial remedial works were required to ensure the continued flow of water between the ditches and improve drainage at the Allotment Gardens. Quotations were subsequently sought and the required remedial works are now in hand.

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 2015-16, 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 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 D L Evans, Cllr C W Butler |
| 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 |
| 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 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 2015-16, 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)

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 hold daytime only surgeries at the New Romney Day Centre.

COUNCILLOR DETAILS

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

For the first time in many years, there is currently a full complement of sixteen 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

Councillor P P Tanner

Councillor J Phipps

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 Mrs B J Gregory

Councillor Ms P Snoad

Councillor C W Butler

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2015/16 Budget Analysis

The Town Council's revenue budget for the year 2015/16 is on target to balance, with an anticipated expenditure and income, each comprising £145,765.00. The cost of New Romney Town Council's services for a Band D property for the financial year was £56.51 equating to £1.09 per week, which was a decrease against the previous year, which was in the amount of £1.10 per week.

The Town Council's Precept for the year 2016/17 in the amount of £158,170.00 represents a cost of £61.51 for New Romney Town Council's services for a Band D property for the year – a total increase of £5.00, equating to £1.18 per week, which is a small increase of £0.09 per week, despite continued increases in costs to the Town Council and the substantial financial impact of new auto-enrolment legislation, which requires the Town Council to enroll all eligible employees in a suitable pension scheme during 2016.

Analysis of Proposed Income and Expenditure for 2016/17

| <u>Income</u> | £ |
|--|-----------------------|
| New Romney Town and Coast Tax Payers | 158,170 |
| Local Council Tax Support Grant Allocation | 6,300 |
| Hire of Land and Properties | 17,340 |
| Allotment Rents | 800 |
| Hut & Winch Site Rents | 4,000 |
| Other Income | <u>560</u> |
| Total Income | <u>187,170</u> |

Expenditure

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Amenities Committee | |
| Sports Field and Maude Pavilion | 2,620 |
| Fairfield Road Recreation Ground | 4,170 |
| The Greens | 4,150 |
| Flagstaff Land | 1,250 |
| Allotment Gardens | 1,840 |
| Land at Coney Banks | 100 |
| Town Square | 200 |
| Assembly Rooms | 7,620 |
| Community Hall | 970 |
| Other | 750 |
| Reserve Fund Contributions | 9,500 |
| Personnel Panel | 83,900 |
| Finance & General Purposes Committee | |
| Town Hall | 11,900 |
| Town Hall House | 1,150 |
| Insurances | 12,000 |
| Legal & Professional Fees | 3,500 |
| Donations | 4,250 |
| Subscriptions | 2,000 |
| Office Equipment | 3,200 |
| Computer Maintenance | 750 |
| Phone/Internet | 1,200 |
| Printing & Stationery | 2,500 |
| Public Clock | 500 |
| Postage and Petty Cash | 2,400 |
| Admin & Miscellaneous (inc. Mayor's/Civic Allowance) | 8,300 |
| Bank Charges | 600 |
| Reserve Fund Contributions | 15,350 |
| Contingency | 250 |
| Planning Committee | <u>250</u> |
| Total Expenditure | <u>187,170</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 2014/15 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.