



TOWN COUNCIL OF FRINTON AND WALTON

TOWN MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2011/2012

COUNCILLOR JOHN L. HALLS MBE

Introduction

I am writing this at the end of my year as Town Mayor, unusually in recent years I had not had the benefit of being Deputy Town Mayor, so it took a couple of months to settle in.

As with my predecessors I must say it is a unique experience and a great honour and privilege to serve and represent residents of the area.

As in the past few years the economy continues to dominate the actions and plans of all local authorities and the Town Council of Frinton & Walton is no exception. It was found necessary for the Town Council to increase the precept for the forthcoming year following three years at holding the same figure and therefore is set at £401,544 for the forthcoming year.

Within the budget the Town Council has agreed to provide a china mug to all primary school aged children who attend a school in the Town Council area and to provide a programme to cover as many events taking place throughout the 4 day Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II celebrations in June.

Town Council Elections 2011

Following elections in May 2011 the Town Council welcomed six new Town Council Members, Councillors Mrs A.I. Cossens, J.W.L. Gatward, C.S. Keston, Mrs D. Miles, A.J. Moss and G.F. Watling.

With the coming of new Members we bid good bye to Councillors Mrs L.C. Allen, D.H. G. Evans, A.W. Large, Mrs K. Mitton, Mrs C.A. Turner MBE and D.B. Watson.

Crime and Disorder

The Crime and Disorder Working Party continues to have the benefit of Sgt Gerard in attendance at its three weekly meetings.

Last June the Town Council agreed to fund a one off cost to upgrade the Control Centre to incorporate the monitoring of the 10 CCTV cameras in the Town Council's area, for broadband, monitoring and maintenance. The Town Council further agreed funding for the ongoing provision of broadband facilities, monitoring and maintenance.

Those Councillors who undertook Community Speedwatch training have now been out putting in practice the training they undertook last year and I am given to understand that members of the public are now being trained to use the “speed gun”.

The continued concern of the Working Party and indeed the Town Council is the closure of Walton Police Station and the possible relocation of the Police Community Support Officers – once again the Town Council continues to lobby both Essex Police and the Police Authority to gain some assurances that the PCSO’s will remain based within the Town Council area.

Planning Applications

We have seen a slight reduction in the number of Planning Applications made for the area (during the period 7 April 2011 and 8 March 2012) of the 200 application and Tree Preservation Orders 24% have been at variance with the decisions of the District Council.

Last November the Town Council successfully held a ‘Public Consultation for Housing Development’ exhibition with material on loan from the District Council when it became evident that there would not be a District Council Exhibition in the Town Councils area. The public attended non-stop throughout the day and my thanks go to those Town Councillors in attendance and the staff at the Town Council offices.

Following the exhibition the Town Council made its recommendations on locally proposed sites for development.

The Town Council’s Local Development Plan Working Party continues to meet and is now considering the introduction and possible implementation of Neighbourhood Plans.

Conservation Area Management

Members have recently agreed the Walton Shop front Guidance document which now awaits adoption by Tendring District Council.

Columbine Centre

Following lengthy consideration the decision was made to close the Catering facility at the Columbine Centre, regretfully making the three part time Catering Assistants redundant. Light refreshments are still available to hirers and opportunities remain for hirers who wish to have catering provided for Weddings, Parties and Commercial Functions etc.

There has been a shift from hirers from the business sector primarily due to the economic restrictions of budgets – but the Centre still has many regularly longstanding bookings daily.



Charity Night at the Columbine Centre

Last September my Mayor's Charity Night brought the Harwich Brass Band and the Harwich Pipers to the Columbine Centre and huge compliments were received by many in attendance.

The Town Council continues to enjoy an extremely good relationship with the Walton & District Indoor Bowls Club located at the Columbine Centre.

Festive Lights

This was the second successive year for Festive Lights at Walton-on-the-Naze and a first for the new lampposts in the revamped Connaught Avenue which were welcomed by businesses and shoppers alike.

Highways & Footpaths

The Town Council and residents continue to be disappointed in the speed at which reported defects to the Highway are investigated and repaired – report are always forwarded to Essex County Council by e-mail as soon as they come to our attention. Fortunately the winter was not so severe as in previous years and this appears to have minimised further problems.

The Town Council agreed to take part in the Essex County Council Salt Scheme and due to only having one snowfall – involvement was minimal. My thanks go to Councillor Mark Cossens in his rapid response to the reports we did have.

Walton Market

The Walton Market Working Party put forward proposals to Tendring District Council for a 5 year lease and at this time of writing the formalities are being undertaken. It is hoped through renewed endeavour that the Market will remain to be a popular addition to the Walton High Street.

Beach Huts



Beach Hut – Frinton on Sea

The Town Council's two beach huts in Frinton remain popular for the school holiday weeks, less so outside of those times. Hirers are always very complimentary on the location, condition and size of the huts.

Town Council Property

The bus shelters, seafront shelters, notice boards and public seats are always well maintained, with regular inspections and works undertaken where necessary.

War Memorials

The Town Council has in the past undertaken repairs and cleaning of War Memorials where necessary and continues to be active in their upkeep.

Allotments

Demand for allotments on all three of the Town Council sites continues to be high and where possible plots are divided when relinquished. There has been very little movement in the last year to the disappointment of keen and potential new plot holders.

Local Transport

The Town Council continues to support local transport and in particular the local bus services and is pleased to see the continuation of the no. 13 albeit a revised route.

Conclusion



My thanks go to the outgoing Town Mayor, Councillor Robert Bucke for his support following the handover of the chain and to the Deputy Town Mayor, Councillor Mark Cossens for his support and willingness to step in on occasions when I have been unable to attend functions. Invitations to engagement throughout the year continue to be many and varied and I am always more than willing to attend, indeed meeting residents through my role as Town Mayor for me has been a highlight throughout the last year.

The Localism Bill and all it may bring, continues to be the forefront of Local Government and is for all if not most of us a watching brief.

My thanks goes to all my Members, the staff at the Council House, the Columbine Centre and the Walton Market for their support and commitment to the Council's work and services.

My final acknowledgement and thanks go to my frequent consort, Sheena McManus who has attended many functions with me during my year of office.