



TOWN COUNCIL OF FRINTON AND WALTON

TOWN MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020

COUNCILLOR FIONA ROBERTSON

Introduction



I feel honoured and privileged to have served the area this year as the Town Mayor. The last 12 months have been very rewarding. I have particularly enjoyed attending events during the year and meeting the many people who give their time freely to run these events. The Town Council thanks all these people very much indeed. I would also like to thank all those people who supported the fundraising activities that generated additional money for the Mayor's Charity. The onset of the COVID-19 virus at the end of the year led to the Town Council taking the unprecedented decision to suspend all meetings and close most services from 19th March 2020. However, I am confident that we will emerge from this crisis ready to provide first class services to the local population.

Town Council Facilities and Services

The Town Council provides a variety of facilities and services for the local population as follows:

1. The Spinney



The Town Council completed a significant project of renovation works to the Spinney, in April 2019. These works have greatly enhanced this valued natural amenity, located at one of the prime entrances to Frinton, adjacent to the train station. During the year this attractive garden has been well maintained and received many positive comments. This year a number of additional features have been added including the planting of 6,000 spring flowering bulbs; eight memorial benches and safety bollards erected to prevent cars damaging the fence next to the Station car park.

2. Land at Church Road, Walton

During the year a piece of land became available opposite the train station at Walton-on-the-Naze. The Town Council decided to buy this land with a view to transforming this area into an attractive garden similar to the Spinney. The works to landscape this area will take place during the next operational period from April 2020 onwards.

3. Great Holland Playground



A new playground was constructed at Great Holland last year and officially opened in February 2019. The playground is being well used by local children. During the year the Town Council considered a proposal to build a car park next to the playground to enable users of the playground to park close to it, making it safer for children in particular. However, local residents objected to this idea and after much discussion this idea was shelved.

4. The Council House



The Town Council took freehold ownership of the Council House building on 11th June 2018. The building was in need of refurbishment and modernisation. Between August and October 2019, a ten-week refurbishment project was carried out to improve the building, create a lettable meeting room/office area and ensure that access is in line with the requirements of disabled citizens, e.g. a lift was installed. During the building renovation project staff relocated to the Columbine Centre and all

Town Council meetings took place at this venue. The newly refurbished Town Council Office was officially opened on 11th November 2019. It has received much positive comment from members of the public, councillors and staff.

5. Toilets for Frinton and Walton



The Town Council did not support the closure by Tendring District Council of toilets in our town centres. Consequently, The Town Council took action and managed to rent the Old Way, Frinton toilet from Tendring District Council. This toilet was comprehensively refurbished as it had deteriorated considerably during the period that it had been shut. It re-opened to the public on 26th March 2019. Over 100 people applied for the job of part-time toilet attendant. The two selected candidates have done a wonderful job of keeping this toilet facility in pristine condition during the year, even adding features such as creating a small garden with flowers at the front of the building. In

addition, the Town Council has invested in a new hard standing at the rear of the building, security fencing and improved drains so enabling a good quality amenity to be provided for residents and visitors alike.

As Tendring Council shut the toilets at Mill Lane, Walton-on-the-Naze, the Town Council has continued to explore alternatives for the provision of toilets at other nearby locations. Unfortunately, no suitable premises have been identified yet but The Town Council will continue to look for a suitable alternative.

Crime and Disorder

The Town Council has continued to work with our local police force in keeping crime and particularly anti-social behaviour to a minimum in our area. The funding of six PCSO's and the regular Crime and Disorder meetings, which are held at the Council House, are vital in this respect. One example of the usefulness of these meetings was the pressure councillors applied to the police attendees to ensure a new PCSO was swiftly appointed to replace a PCSO who had left. The Town Council was delighted that a new PCSO T. Martin was swiftly appointed to this role. This year the Town Council have participated in a survey covering crime and disorder matters in Essex. Feedback from the police indicates that the survey has led to initiatives to provide better communication with the Town Council about police deployment and how this is matched to criminal activity. The Town Council will continue to explore new initiatives to combat crime and antisocial behaviour in our area. The Town Council are convinced that in these days of Police service cuts, our local PCSO's are invaluable and we will continue to work with local Police to ensure that our area remains a safe, low crime area to live in and visit.

Bus and Seafront Shelters



The Town Council continues to maintain eight seafront shelters. During the year all seafront shelters were refurbished and repaired by a contractor who was appointed following a competitive tender process. These shelters continue to be blighted by petty vandalism; with any damage incurred repaired as soon as possible. The Mosquito security device installed in August 2018 in the Clock Tower beachfront shelter appears to have been successful in reducing vandalism at

this location. During 2020 the Town Council will appoint a contractor to carry out the refurbishment of the eighteen bus shelters that it is responsible for. The Town Council is committed to ensuring that its' Bus and Seafront shelters are maintained to a high standard for visitors and local residents.

Beach Huts



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.

The Columbine Centre



New charges for Columbine Centre customers were approved by the Council to come into effect on 1st April 2019. In addition, following the appointment of a part-time Promotions Officer based at Walton Information Centre, work has been carried out to promote the Columbine Centre. This has included developing a new website, www.columbinecentre.co.uk, regular advertising in local media, including Facebook and growing the contact list. The Town Council has also continued to encourage local clubs and community groups to use the Columbine Centre especially the well-equipped theatre and the purpose-built Walton Indoor Bowls Club. Some very good and well attended events have taken place during the year, including those that draw in customers from a wider area. For example, the Columbine Centre hosted the ELO Encounter and Tendring Brass Band, both successful but very different music events. Columbine Centre bookings are beginning to increase as this work bears fruit. For example, new regular bookings have been received for youth football and creative technology classes for younger children.

A number of improvements to the Columbine Centre have been carried out during the year including new large, lighted signage, new stage lights and new outside furniture. In addition, the Columbine Centre had an online booking system installed on its' website and a contract for a credit card machine was agreed; both to help generate more custom.

As the Town Council has taken on the provision of more local services the roles of our staff have expanded to meet these new challenges. Consequently, in April 2019 a new staff structure was put in place for staff at the Columbine Centre. This meant the creation of a new role, the Senior Facilities Operative, who became responsible overall for the Columbine Centre site. Staff at the Columbine Centre also took on additional duties including managing toilets, the market, and the regular inspection of defibrillators and playgrounds. This new staff structure is working well and staff have responded excellently to any new challenges.

Defibrillators



The Town Council has installed six defibrillators located at Frinton seafront toilets; Paveys Estate Agent Connaught Avenue; The Naze, Walton; Great Holland Village Hall; 'The Ship' at Kirby-le-Soken and at the pharmacy, Kirby Cross. Various community groups helped fund these useful community assets. As stated above these assets are regularly inspected. They have been used on several occasions.

Notice Boards and Public Seats

Notice Boards are part of the Town Council's communication system with all Town Council agendas published on each Notice Board prior to each meeting. A new Notice Board was erected during the year close to the Columbine Centre.

The Town Council has 138 sponsored public seats; most of them being more than 25 years old. A new seat was installed this year outside the Walton Information Centre.

Allotments



The Town Council manages 3 allotment sites at Kirby-le-Soken, Wittonwood Road and Waltham Way. The Town Council has agreed in principle to hand back the Kirby-le-Soken site, which it rents, to the land-owner. This is because there is less demand nowadays for allotment sites and they are costly to maintain. The other two allotment sites are owned by the Town Council and they will continue as allotment facilities offered to interested parties.

We have short waiting lists at all sites, so if you would like to be considered for a plot then just enquire at the Town Council offices to get your name on the list for one of the sites.

Walton Market

The market is open on every Thursday, from April till December and on most Bank holidays. Potential new stallholders are welcome to apply for a place at the market. Regular promotional events are run to encourage customers to attend the market. It is particularly busy during the summer months when many visitors come to Walton. A new five-year Walton Market lease was agreed with Tendring District Council this year, making provision of this service possible for the foreseeable future.

Planning Applications

During the course of the year the Town Council has considered and made recommendations on 265 planning applications and Tree Preservation Orders. Out of the decisions made during that time by Tendring District Council 40 have been at variance.

Financial Management

The Town Council received a clear audit again this year. The programme of larger projects that have been undertaken in the last two years is now complete and reserves are down to an appropriate level in relation to our turnover. Therefore, any future large-scale projects would require an increase in the precept to fund them. The precept for this forthcoming year is £595,611.

Staffing

I would like to thank our staff for their work on your behalf during the past year. What is most impressive is how flexible staff are and how they are willing to work over and above their normal duties. For example, the Promotions Officer undertaking door and bar duties at events or the Toilet Attendants gardening at the Spinney.

The Council House staff deal with many questions and queries from our residents on a variety of matters not just Town Council issues. They are invariably helpful and friendly whatever enquiry a member of the public makes. The Council House office at the Triangle Shopping Centre is open from 9 am to 1 pm Monday to Friday.

Website

A new Town Council website was developed this year as Essex County Council withdrew their hosting of the previous website. The new website is up to date with minutes and agendas uploaded regularly. The website address is: www.fwtc.co.uk.

Conclusion



It has been a busy and constructive year. The Town Council has achieved a great deal this year.

I would also like to thank Cllr. Mrs. Ann Oxley, my Deputy Mayor this year, for her steadfast support and commitment to all that is good in our area. I thank all Members too for their excellent community work in our respective wards in Frinton, Walton, Great Holland and Kirby.

Councillor Mrs Fiona Robertson
Town Mayor