

HYTHE TOWN COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT – 2018/19

This report will be placed in full on the Town Council's website – which can be found at www.hythetckentparishes.gov.uk

Mayor's Introduction

Firstly I would like to thank Lieutenant Callum McKenna for his support as my Mayors Chaplain. His unwavering enthusiasm and joie de vivre has been a pleasure to work with. As Mayor I raise money through my Mayors Charity Fund. Rather than choose specific, perhaps more well known, charities I have helped smaller, local causes. It has been particularly poignant to see how many children and young people are battling severe illnesses and a real privilege to donate to their extremely worthwhile fundraising efforts. I feel proud to represent such a caring Town with so many vibrant societies and groups all dedicated to making this a wonderful place to live.

Meetings

There have been 20 Council meetings during the course of this last year. Its principal Committees – Finance and General Purposes and Plans and Works have met 10 and 15 times respectively. Thanks are due to the respective Chairmen of both these Committees – Councillor Paul O'Connor and Councillor Keith Miles. Other Committees and Sub-Committees of the Council and its Committees include the following which have all met during the course of the last year:

Personnel Sub-Committee
Internal Audit and Assets Sub-Committee
Allotments Working Group

Some of the above Sub-Committees and Groups have included not only Town Councillors but also representatives from outside bodies and Co-opted Members of the Council who have brought their own skills and life experiences into the sphere of the Council. The Town Council has long subscribed to partnership working and it is very grateful for the external input and assistance which it receives in the conducting of its business.

Charity Trust

The Town Council is the Corporate Trustee for a number of Charities. There have been 5 meetings of the full Charity Trustees. These meetings are held separately to Council meetings. The Town Council is responsible for the operation of four charities – Horn Street, Palmersh, Eaton Lands and Davis Oaklands. It also provides the administrative support to the Wakefield Bequest, of which 4 serving Councillors are currently Trustees.

Annual returns are undertaken by the Town Council for all the above Charities to the Charity Commission.

Oaklands – Local History Room / Museum

Mr Kevin Bailey continues in his role as the Honorary Curator of the Museum and he usually frequents Oaklands on a fortnightly basis, fielding many and varied enquiries of an historical nature. He also ensures that archived material is catalogued. Kevin provides a valued and much sought after service and grateful thanks are due to him for his outstanding contribution over the past year.

Dementia Forum

Originally created by a small team of Councillors, the forum now has many more members, its own website at www.dementiaawarehythe.co.uk and a training program useful to business, carers and people living with dementia. Dementia is a growing issue in every community and the forum's aim is to provide support and acceptance for people living with dementia and those who care for them. Drop-in sessions occur on the first and third Tuesday of every month from 10.30 to 12.00 in Hythe Library and the Town Council fully supports the Dementia Forum's hard work and dedication.

Oaklands – Bandstand Concerts



The Town Council continues to run its popular free band programme with 16 performances during the course of the last summer providing a large array of music. A similar programme is planned for the forthcoming season. The programme is planned to provide for a wide variety of musical tastes - from the Big Band sound to solo performers. Details of the band concerts are available on the Town Council website.

Town Hall



The Civic Society hosts weekly tours of the Town Hall as part of their organised walks which take in the many facets of the Town's history – including Oaklands and its Museum and 23 guided walks have taken place during the course of the year. The Town Hall has been used by 18 organisations and private individuals.

The Town Hall's Undercroft has been utilised on 24 occasions by charities and local organisations and is recognised as an effective public focal point and service.

The Town Hall is licensed to hold Weddings and Civil Partnerships and 6 Ceremonies were held last year with a further 5 booked so far for this year. Further information can be obtained from Mrs Margaret Stewart at Hythe Town Council to book this historic venue.

Eaton Lands



The Town Council continues to liaise closely with the Hythe Civic Society regarding the environs of Eaton Lands.

The northern meadow area continues to be maintained, with the grass amenity area to the south regularly cut 12 times per year and the wildflower element to the north managed so as to try and ensure its sustainability. Paths are regularly cut through the meadow so that people can enjoy the area. Public Footpath HB 25 which runs through the meadow has been cut back and the woodland area's paths and steps have been refurbished. A group of volunteers will also be "out and about" in the Eaton Lands woodland to undergo general maintenance and enhance this beautiful area. Work to remove dead Ash trees is ongoing. 45 trees are to be replanted over the next year – 15 Hornbeam, 15 Oak and 15 Flowering cherry. A new Community Orchard is currently under construction and with improvements to the wildflower meadow the aim is to encourage the short-haired bumble bee to flourish.

Hythe & District Volunteers will be taking on the ongoing maintenance of the Eaton Lands woodland and the Town Council are very much looking forward to working with this amazing group of volunteers to enhance and maintain this little gem of wildlife oasis.

Town Council Allotment Sites



Recent allotment inspections have revealed that the allotment sites are all in good shape.

Allotments Working Group

The Town Council's Allotments Working Group works in close collaboration with the tenants and their representatives and meets twice a year to discuss ongoing issues.

Eaton Lands Allotments

There is a large area of Eaton Lands which is given over to three distinct allotment areas which are occupied with 105 plots and there is a waiting list of 6 "would-be" tenants. The Town Council rents these areas from the Charity. The allotments have been steadily improving over the years. With the long waiting lists there is now an even greater need to ensure that all the plots are properly cultivated.

Longbridge

This statutory allotment site of 13 plots has a current waiting list of 4.

Twiss Road

The Twiss Road site is fully occupied with 37 plots and a waiting list of 26.

Horn Street

The Horn Street site is fully occupied with 3 plots and a waiting list of 2.

Hythe Green

This informal open space area – which is maintained by the Town Council - is the host to many activities including x 14 Boot Fairs inclusive of the Mayor's Boot Fair. Local charities and organisations benefit from these events and it provides them the opportunity to boost their funds. Details of the forthcoming Summer Boot Fairs are on the Town Council's website.

There are also several circuses and funfairs which are staged regularly on the Green. There have been 25 bookings including car parking and Boot Fairs events during the course of the last year. The Green is also used by the large biennial events – Hythe Festival Week and the Hythe Venetian Fete.

Thanks are due to the members of the Green Preservation Society which undertakes regular litter picking on the Green.

Property Matters

The Town Council has embarked on a further four year programme of upgrading its properties. The properties for which it is responsible are Oaklands, including the Museum and Hythe Library, Oaklands Grounds and Bandstand, the Town Hall, Sanford House, Sports Pavilion, the Hythe War Memorial and the Shepway Cross - together with its landholdings at the Green, Palmarsh, Horn Street and South Road Recreation Grounds and Eaton Lands. It also is responsible for the Hythe Skatepark, the Grove and it leases land to the Hythe Cricket and Squash Club and the Hythe Lawn Tennis Club.

Hythe Sports Pavilion



The Hythe Sports Pavilion has been well used by football teams during the season as well as other organisations. It provides four changing rooms, officials' changing areas, a lift and disabled shower facilities and a first floor suite with a balcony and a fully-fitted kitchen and store areas. Externally, there is a car park for 32 vehicles and a kiosk to serve the tennis and bowls areas which lie adjacent. The Sports Pavilion has been utilised by organisations, individuals and regular bookers include Weightwatchers, U3A, Art Group, Kent County Council, Pilates, Fitness, Zumba and Rise & Shine.

Sporting Activities

The Town Council's sports facilities at South Road are envied throughout the district. The Council works with local football teams, running, and tennis and bowls clubs to improve fitness for female and male, old and young. At the various open spaces managed by the Council, play equipment and free play areas are also organised and paid for by the Council. Details of price charges for hiring the football pitches and tennis and bowls can be found on the Town Council's website.

Appointments to Outside Bodies

The Town Council also has appointees to other bodies and the Town Council is very grateful to those Members who have served this year on the following bodies:

Age UK Hythe & Lyminge
Hythe Twinning Association
Hythe Business & Tourism
Kent Association of Local Councils
Hospital of St Bartholomew and St John
Hythe Institute Fund
Hythe Sick Fund
Anne Peirson Trust
Newington Unknown Donor's Charity
Wakefield Bequest

Thanks are due to all the above local organisations and to the others that work so hard on the Town's behalf.

Mayor's Engagements

Over the past year The Mayor has represented Hythe at many events. He has been particularly active in supporting events held within The Confederation of The Cinque Ports of which Hythe is one of the Head Ports. However he has also attended invitations from further afield particularly where there has been the opportunity to promote Hythe and encourage people to visit. Most of these invitations are specifically targeted to raise funds for charities whilst giving attending Mayors time to network and exchange ideas. In addition to this The Mayor has presided over 20 meetings of The Town Council and engaged with smaller local groups and charities in his role as Chairman of The Council.

Staffing

Mrs Margaret Stewart was appointed as Town Clerk in November 2018 after stepping up from her role as Deputy Town Clerk. Mrs Rebecca Hack joined Hythe Town Council in January this year as the Administration Assistant. Mrs Julie Abbott also joined the Town Council in January this year as the Responsible Financial Officer.

All other staff remain in situ, the Plans & Works Clerk, Mrs Wendy Lee, the Town Sergeant, Mr Terry Reene, the Caretaker, Mr Tim Cudby the Assistant Caretaker and Tennis & Bowls Attendant, Mr Bernie Kertland and Mrs Shelia Camfield who attends with Bernie over the Easter weekend and throughout the summer season. Thanks go to them all for their hard work in supporting Councillors and in the ongoing day to day running of the Council.