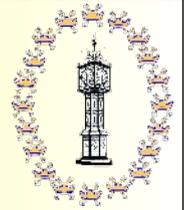


Downham Market Town Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2013 ~ 2014



2013-2014 Mayor's Report

My Year As Mayor

Over the past months, the Mayoress Jean and I have been around the Town and district at a wide variety of events, and our warm thanks in appreciation goes to all our many hosts and hostesses throughout my mayoral year.



Cllr David Sharman prepares for his final Council meeting as Mayor

The historic churches have so much appeal; however our own Civic Service at the more modern Downham Market Methodist Church was also a great honour giving me a chance to welcome the dignitaries who we have met before on our travels, usually on their "home ground", when we have visited other Council's functions. We have met some very nice people and it is surprising the esteem that Downham Market is held in by other Councils.



Poppy Appeal Launch

A particularly busy weekend began with the St Winnold's Parade and breakfast. This was an amazing morning which was spent meeting dignitaries from far and wide. Bernard, Church Farm's Suffolk Punch, led the parade through the Town which finished with a great breakfast in the Town Hall. To have support from the children from Hillcrest School and Nelson Academy and to see the fabulous art work from Downham Academy made a morning to



Opening the lift in the Town Hall

remember. That evening we attended the Royal British Legion Annual Dinner in the Town Hall; the guest of honour was Sir Jeremy Bagge.

Other memorable occasions include the switching on of the Christmas Lights and opening the new lift in the Town Hall.



Christmas Lights Switch-On

One memory that I would like to forget is the sight of the burnt out Fire Station, our thanks go to those who managed to save all the surrounding buildings from what could have been a terrible disaster.

The Mayoral year has been a fascinating time and I would like to thank all Councillors and Office Staff for their support.

Cllr David Sharman (Mayor of Downham Market 2013 - 2014)

Community Development Committee

Many of the events the Town Council are involved with come under the umbrella of this Standing Committee and these activities alone keep us pretty busy.

However, it is this Committee, with its slightly different way of working, that allows members of the community to become more involved in a variety of different initiatives.

One of our areas of focus this year was to explore ways in which to give the younger members of our community a voice. Although with the support of my fellow Councillor, Robin Pegg, a Youth Council has been in existence for a while, finding ways to sustain a group where members are continually "moving on" has been something of a challenge!

This year, with the support and involvement of our Academy we have, we hope, found a mechanism for a more sustainable Youth Council. Already the Youth Council have plans, and earlier in the year were instrumental in raising awareness, (and thereby changing), County Council plans to significantly raise the cost of transport for sixth formers wishing to attend the academy - something which would have placed real financial pressure on many local families.

Another recent initiative of this Committee was to invite all the town centre shopkeepers and businesses to one of our meetings to explore ways in which the town centre could encourage more customers. Although still in its early stages

a Town Team has been formed following this initial meeting.

We have also been supporting a healthy Communities Project which is engaging with people to establish what we as a community think would make us happier and healthier. Aspects of a healthy community could be as varied as training people and communities in how to support people with Alzheimer's, to reducing isolation for young people through better transport links. The initial engagement event for this was on the 27th March, but the organisers are well aware that for many people a daytime event is inappropriate and they are looking at ways to engage with people who work during the day.

It is important to remember that the structure of this Committee gives all members of the community a place to raise ideas or projects which could be of benefit to the community. For example, one area I would like to explore over the next months is the possibility of linking this town to Creative Arts East so that we as a town can have access to a full programme of professional arts events throughout the year. This is something that really could happen, but it can only happen if the Community Development Committee works in partnership with other community groups in the town.



Cllr Jenny Groom

(Chairman ~ Community Development Committee)

Current DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCILLORS and the WARDS they represent

Mrs Vera I Botham	383129	South	Mrs Sheila M. Nunn	383243	South
Mrs Pat D Damper	384489	Old Town	Robin A Pegg (Deputy Mayor)	385815	North
Frank E Daymond	383618	North	Charlie Pyatt	388023	East
John W. Doyle (Mayor)	382386	South	Jeffrey J. Reed	388986	South
Mike P Ford	387770	South	Ms Marion C Ross	386136	East
John K. Fox	382963	North	David Sharman	381393	East
Jenny Groom	383963	Old Town	Mrs Pam B Sharp	387770	North
Mike Howland	385588	North	Tony D. Stacey	383120	Old Town
Becky L Judge	382166	East	Malcolm D Starreveld	07837 265752	East
Patrick W Neate	384852	Old Town	David P Sutton	385685	Old Town

Town Clerk: Mrs Jean Markwell, Downham Market Town Council Offices,
15 Paradise Road, Downham Market, Norfolk PE38 9HS ((01366) 387770
Deputy Clerk: Mr Richard Davidson ~ *Administrator:* Mrs Carole Woolnough

Receptionist: Ms Nikki Hannan ~ *Cleaner:* Mrs Ann Bensusan

General Maintenance Officers: David Bensusan, Mark Errington and Trevor Goodrum

Planning and Environmental Committee

This year the Planning & Environment Committee has continued to represent the rate payers and inhabitants of the Town to the best of our abilities as well as putting your views to the Borough Council Planning Department - not always with success, as we are only seen as an advisory body as part of the planning process.

We as a Committee have attended, as individuals and a group, many discussions and lectures to try to make sense and understand the new regulations, information and interpretations, by the Government of the Day.

During the last year we as a committee have met twenty one times and deliberated on forty nine planning applications and one special one for the Ben Bailey site of ninety seven dwellings. We refused twelve and deferred three and agreed to thirty five progressing. We have had one developer appeal to a higher authority. The appeal failed.

We have met with one potential developer who put their ideas forward for their development in your Town and we, as a committee, gave our views in response.

We as a Committee will continue to strive to serve the Town as best we can to achieve its enhancement, by looking at every planning application, considering its merits and failings and also the needs of the Town and its environment. To help us to achieve this we need you the public to feed us your views and thoughts at planning meetings, or in a letter or E-mail form marked for the attention of the Planning Committee through The Town Clerk Mrs J. M. Markwell.

A continuous process of monitoring grit bins, dog bins, and litter bins for the requirements of the Town are carried out and where needed the appropriate licenses acquired from the appropriate authority.

One of the problems in the Town is still the dumping in the droves, lanes, streams, and dykes of garden surplus, fern cuttings, unwanted plants, tree trimmings and grass cuttings and some rubbish or litter thrown in for good measure, this causes you the ratepayers the extra expense of approximately £80.00 to £100.00 a time to clear. There is a new waste collection and disposal system in operation in the Town by the Borough Council. The closure of the paper collection service to the Town and local villages by the Save a Tree group means that all surplus paper that is not shredded should now be put in the green bin.

There is a Norfolk County Council waste collecting and recycling self delivery unit operating off the A1122 at Crimplesham on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays 52 weeks a year.

I am requested by the Chairman and Members of the Environmental sub Committee to appeal for occupants of the Town who wish to volunteer to assist in keeping the Town clean and tidy as well as other forms of assistance. This is on a volunteer basis and people are asked to forward their names and contact to the Town Council Office to be registered on a help list, all volunteers will be covered by the Town Council operations insurance.

Cllr Frank Daymond
(Chairman ~ Planning Committee)

Town Hall Committee

This past 12 months has been a very busy time. The Town Hall Committee has worked hard to bring to fruition some long needed improvements, refurbishment and updating. It is many years since any significant work was done, but some of the plans have now been realised.

The new lift was installed and with the help of a grant from Norfolk County Council, and the assistance of our previous County Councillor, Sheila Hutson in helping to arrange the grant. This gave less able people the chance to get upstairs to any function that was available to them. At the same time, we arranged for the foyer to be completely refurbished and the results can be clearly seen and appreciated.

We are now forging ahead with the refurbishment of both the Bar Room and the

Assembly Room, following formal consent from the full Town Council.

My vision for the future of the Town Hall is to make it a viable letting place and to make it a pleasant place for Town's people to want to use.

The Cinema is still very popular and continues to gain in popularity, this of course is subject to the films that are shown. I want to thank the small band of volunteers that run this for the town. They do put in a few hours to bring the cinema to Downham Market.

There is still much to do, but this will take time and money and the continued efforts of the Town Hall Committee. I want to thank my committee for all their hard work.

Cllr Robin Pegg
(Chairman ~ Town Hall Committee)

Property Committee

The Town Council has a considerable portfolio of properties. The Town Hall and the Jubilee Community Centre and field are part of this portfolio, but, for the Town Council these two units are each managed by their own Committees. The remainder of the properties come under the jurisdiction of the Property Committee.

Car Parks: These take a considerable amount of time with checking and doing our best to keep them safe and well lit: We are going to improve the lighting quality over the next year. The entrance to the Paradise Car Park has become rather pitted over successive winters and we are working to get this repaired.

The Town Clock: It is now some years since the refurbishment of the Clock and we are setting aside money for the repainting of the exterior. Regular maintenance of the workings of the Clock ensures that a reasonably accurate time is shown by the hands.

War Memorial: As has been reported, the Town Council is anxious to ensure the continued life of the War Memorial in its current position and we are working to have it cleaned and the lettering and crests repainted. We are also aware that the timber and surrounds of the Memorial needs some attention and this we hope to tackle before too long.

Cllr John Fox (Chairman ~ Property Committee)

Finance Committee

Over the last three years, one of the things that the Town Council was tasked with was to get the general reserves to an acceptable level within a sensible budget. The Council has done this; in fact the last visit by the internal auditors accepted the workings of this Council.

ACCOUNTS SUMMARY 2013 - 2014			
	EXPENDITURE	INCOME	NETT EXPENDITURE
Administration	£140,000	£20,000	£120,000
Loan Repayments	£41,500		£41,500
Community Development	£13,000	£6,000	£7,000
Amenities Young People	£1,000		£1,000
Audit	£5,000		£5,000
Professional Fees	£6,000		£6,000
Burial Board	£10,000		£10,000
Section 137	£6,000	£1,500	£4,500
Car Parks and Street Lights	£29,000	£5,000	£24,000
Planning	£12,000	£2,000	£10,000
Property	£14,000	£3,000	£11,000
Rents		£31,000	-£31,000
Grants/Donations	£3,500		£3,500
Jubilee Community Centre	£5,000		£5,000
Insurance	£7,000	£1,500	£5,500
Market	£4,000	£38,000	-£34,000
Town Hall	£103,000	£37,000	£66,000
Special Projects	£33,000		£33,000
Reserves	£9,500		£9,500
Grant BCKL&WN		£31,000	-£31,000
Total	£442,500	£176,000	£266,500

Although Councillors feel they work under strict budgetary constraints, they have achieved a great deal during the last year. For instance the Town Hall Committee have carried out extensive improvements. Through their hard work more plans are in hand to make further improvements to the Town Hall during the coming months. The Property Committee is looking to improve the car park lighting in Hollies No 1 Car Park and Town Hall Car Park.

The Council has organised lots of community events, such as the very successful Water Festival, Christmas Lights switch-on and is also, this year, looking at plans to make more developments at the Jubilee Community Centre.

Once again the Council has kept the precept constant and there are no increases. In fact there is actually a saving by Downham Market Town Council. I give great thanks to the 3 Councillors and the Clerk who work closely with me to prepare the budget.

*Cllr Charlie Pyatt
(Chairman ~ Finance Committee)*

This is a report of the work of Downham Market Town Council throughout the Council year from May 2013 to April 2014

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