



BROADSTAIRS & ST. PETER'S
TOWN COUNCIL

Broadstairs and St. Peter's Town Council
Annual Town Assembly Report 16 March 2020
Council Report by the Mayor Cllr Paul Moore

i) Councillors

Broadstairs and St. Peter's Town Council has 15 elected Councillors. This Civic Year marked the first year of a new term of office and saw the election of 4 new Councillors.

The political split of the Council is as follows:

Conservative: 11

Labour: 1

Green Party: 1

Thanet Independents: 1

Independent: 1

ii) Committee and sub-committee structure:

The Town Council has:

3 main committees that report to the Council: The Finance and General Purposes Committee, the Planning Committee and the Community Assets Committee. This year has seen the formation of the VE Day Working Party and due to begin in April, the Victoria Gardens Kiosk Working Party.

The Town Council has 6 sub-committees, and a Town Forum which is made up of community groups and organisations.

Allotments and Land Sub-Committee

Assets and Budget Review Sub-Committee

Staff Management Sub-Committee

Leisure & Tourism Sub-Committee

Internal Audit Effectiveness Review Sub-Committee

Neighbourhood Planning Sub-Committee (which reports to the Planning committee)

To date during the current civic year the Council has met 6 times with one further meeting planned at the end of March.

iii) Staff

The Town Council has the following staffing structure

Office staff: Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Senior Administrator, Mayors Secretary/Administrator and an Events and Bookings Manager who started at the beginning of 2020. It is hoped that a part-time, 10 hours per week Facilities Administrator will join the Council in the coming months to look after the assets now owned by the Town Council. All staff including the Town Clerk are part-time.

Other staff include a Town Sergeant and Caretaker.

In the next few months will see the retirement of two long-serving staff members.

The Town Council is committed to staff training and sees this as an essential component in delivering the best services for the town. This year one member of staff continues to work towards their NVQ Level 3 in business administration and another member of staff has received their Personal Licence. The Council is up-to-date with statutory workplace training.

iv) Council Tax:

The Town Council has RESOLVED to instruct Thanet District Council to collect a precept of £661,452 (£68.40 per year for a household paying Council Tax Band D).

In addition to raising the precept, the Town Council will be drawing from reserves to finance part of the 2020-2021 Budget.

v) Town Council Activities, Projects and Services

The Town Council has the following functions:

Statutory:

Convene public meetings

Town Council Website

16 Town Council Notice boards

Allotments: Norman road and Prospect Sites

Accounts and Audit

Civic and Mayoral:

Civic Events, Civic Service, Remembrance Service, Annual Town Assembly, Annual Council meeting and Mayor-Making.

Mayor's promotional activities e.g. community events, official visits to other towns.

Non Statutory:

The Town Council now owns two bookable event spaces in Pierremont Hall, these are available for community bookings and two further bookable meeting rooms will be available in the coming months.

It is expected that the Retort House sports building in the Albion Street Car Park, also now owned by the Town Council, will be open for sports bookings towards the summer months.

The Town Council also provides organisational funding and grants for local organisations and groups, which can cover every day running costs and event funding.

vi) Policies and Business Plan

The Town Clerk has continued to work hard over the year updating and reviewing its working policies.

During the 2019-20 civic year the Town Council has updated and adopted new Financial Regulations, a new Transparency policy and the Councillor Gift and Hospitality Register. All other policies are reviewed annually as part of the Council's Internal Audit and Effective review processes.

The Town Council will begin to work towards the production of a new 5-year business plan at the beginning of the next Civic Year.

vii) Newsletter

The Town Council now has a quarterly Newsletter and the publication of the ninth edition will be published in the next week. Copies of the newsletter are available to collect from Pierremont Hall and it can also be downloaded from the Town Council website.



BROADSTAIRS & ST. PETER'S
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Broadstairs and St. Peter's Town Council Finance & General Purposes Committee Report 16 March 2020

Cllr Rosalind Binks
Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee

The Finance & General Purposes Committee reports to Full Council and has held 6 meetings in the past financial year. The following Sub-Committees report directly to the Finance & General Purposes Committee: Leisure & Tourism, Allotments & Land, Staff Management, Assets & Budget Review, Internal Audit Effectiveness Review.

Leisure & Tourism Sub-Committee: This Committee discusses the annual allocation of Town Council grants both to promote the town's tourism and also to enhance the quality of life for residents. Part of the precept for the Town Council helps to finance individual events held in the town as well as support civic and other organisations both large and small that make a real difference to various sectors of the community. Thanet District Council discontinued additional finance for town events several years ago.

All applications are carefully considered with recommendations being made to the Finance & General Purposes Committee. For the financial year 2019-2020, the following grants were awarded: Events £35,450, Support for Organisations including Friends of Mockett's Wood and the Tourist Information Kiosk £14,845 – a total of £50,295. For the 2020-2021 financial year, the Council has awarded £34,600 for events and a further £ 15,450 for organisations, totalling £ 50,050.

With the current health crisis, it is clear that some of the events may be seriously curtailed or not go ahead at all.

Allotments & Land Sub-Committee:

The Town Council has two allotment sites, Norman Road and Prospect Road, as well as Mockett's Wood in St. Peter's, land in the area of Pierremont Park immediately surrounding Pierremont Hall and its ancillary buildings. The Town Council also has a long lease on Culmers Amenity Land which is owned by CT10 Parochial Charities. The land at Pierremont Park and Culmers is currently maintained by Box Green Horticulture Limited and overseen by the Council.

Other Projects and Activities:

Whilst the Pierremont Hall and Retort House projects take centre stage, the Council continues to manage and fund summer entertainment which includes various bands and Punch & Judy on Viking Bay beach, November 5th fireworks, extended opening hours for the toilets and the beach lift, the

bandstand, kiosk and its arena (leased from Thanet District Council), Broadstairs in Bloom, decorative lighting, Town Trail notice boards and other street furniture, including new benches in Reading Street, as well as year-round security in Pierremont Park to help protect the town's assets. In the past year, the Council also commissioned an extensive survey of all toilets within Broadstairs & St. Peter's.

The next financial year has a budget for several environmental improvements in the town.

On behalf of the Members of the Finance & General Purposes Committee I would like to thank the Town Clerk and all her Staff for their invaluable work over the past year. They have continued to work untiringly for the residents of Broadstairs & St Peter's in spite of enormous inconveniences caused by the building works carrying on around them.



BROADSTAIRS & ST. PETER'S
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Broadstairs and St. Peter's Town Council Community Assets Committee Report 16 March 2020

Cllr Rosalind Binks
Chairman of the Community Assets Committee

The Community Assets Committee oversees the refurbishment of Pierremont Hall, its ancillary buildings, Retort House and any potential purchases or transfers of community assets for the Town. The Committee reports directly to Full Council and has held 13 meetings in the past financial year. Since building projects often require rapid decisions, the Committee has delegated spending limits and powers, limited to a two-year period, ending in July 2020.

The fully refurbished Music Room and The Cottage have been in use by tenants for several months. Phase 1 of the refurbishment of Pierremont Hall has been completed, providing two function rooms (Council Chamber and Mayor's Parlour), kitchen and toilet facilities and five office suites of various sizes in the Ground and two upper floors. The Town Council offices have moved from the southern wing to the top floor.

Phase 2 of the project begins shortly and will include development of the Council offices into two further office suites, removal of the external fire escape and a ramp for disabled access.

Phase 3 will be the complete refurbishment of the basement.

Outside, the old wooden building and the pre-fab have been demolished and replaced with a grassed area to the rear of the Hall, a community garden and some overflow parking spaces. Parking spaces are now fully allocated for tenants, council officers and visitors. Plans include one space for one electric charging.

Refurbishment of Retort House is complete, providing a community sports and leisure hall with new toilets, changing rooms and kitchen facilities in one half of the building and a commercial business in the other half. The opening of Retort House has been considerably delayed by the need to upgrade power supply to the building. However, all efforts are being made to get this building fully operational for the summer.

The Committee continues to hold discussions with Thanet District Council about other community assets but is very mindful of any extra financial pressure that may accompany a purchase or transfer.

As Chairman of the Community Assets Committee I would like to thank all the Committee Members, Council Officers and contractors for their support during the past year. But most of all I thank the Town Clerk, Danielle Dunn. The Council and ultimately the Town has benefited enormously from her considerable knowledge and experience and her ability to overcome every challenge (and there have been many) throughout the past year. She has quite simply been the driving force of this project.



BROADSTAIRS & ST. PETER'S
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Broadstairs and St. Peter's Town Council Planning Committee Report 16 March 2020

Cllr Jill Bayford
Chairman of the Planning Committee

The Planning Committee convenes on a monthly basis and consists of six members: Cllrs. Jill Bayford (Chair), John Buckley (Vice Chair), Ruth Bailey, Rosalind Binks, Roger Binks and Wendy Moore. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor, Cllrs. Paul Moore and Roy Dexter sit ex officio.

General planning information can be obtained from the Town Clerk's office. The annual calendar of meetings, weekly planning application lists, current and historic agenda and minutes are available to read or download from the Town Council's website. Thanet District Council's planning portal is also available to access for all details of all current and recently determined planning applications.

The Town Council, as a statutory consultee, receives a weekly list of all Broadstairs & St Peters planning applications. Members personally review all new and amended applications and if concerned, they will request the application be presented to the Town Council's Planning Committee for consideration. The Committee will then discuss, resolve and make recommendations to the District Council's Planning Department.

To assist the Committee when determining reserved applications, members will take into account written support and complaints, comments from the Broadstairs Society, feedback from District Council planning officers and will listen to public, neighbours' or developers' representations at meetings. Members also make use of a number of planning guides, for example the 2006 and the draft 2015-2031 Local Plan, flat conversion guidelines and the Broadstairs & St Peter's Town Design Statement and the impending Broadstairs & St Peter's Neighbourhood Plan that will become an integral component of the emerging Local Plan.

Over the past year, the 12 Town Council planning meetings considered a total of 289 applications.

A large proportion of the applications relate to home improvements, which include single and two storey extensions, conservatories, loft conversions and dormer windows. The remaining applications include housing, retail and commercial development, flat conversion and signage. There were 47 recommendations for refusal, 16% of the total applications. Examples of concern included over development, detrimental to the street scene, cramming, in an area of high townscape value, not in keeping with the character and pattern of surrounding development, overlooking, loss of trees, highways issues, poor elevation design, density of housing and encroaching on the green wedge. However, a number of refusals just require a minor change to resolve concerns. For example, design improvements, boundary clearances or a change of scale, location or materials.

Applicants that cannot mutually resolve issues and object to a resolution of refusal have the right to appeal to the Planning Inspector.

The majority of applications, through delegated powers, are resolved by the District Council's Planning department. The remaining contentious applications are referred to the District Council's Planning Committee for consideration. If necessary, the District Councillor also has the power to 'call in' and refer a Broadstairs & St Peter's application to Thanet District Council Planning Committee.

The Town Council's Planning Committee considered 60 applications for tree works last year ranging from crown thinning and pollarding to felling. Felling of healthy trees are always recommended for refusal unless the tree is dying or diseased, the roots are affecting the foundations or drains or the tree is encroaching on the highway. New developments are encouraged to plan around existing trees and diseased trees that require felling are usually subject to the replanting of a suitable replacement. All trees in a Conservation Area are protected and other trees that have street scene amenity value have or will incur a Preservation Order. Trees along the highway come under the control of Kent County Council. The Town Council has appointed a voluntary Tree Warden, Karen McKenzie, who takes responsibility for examining all applications that involve tree works and bringing them to Council for consideration at meetings through the ward councillor concerned in each case. Additionally, if any resident is aware of any mature tree under threat or has concerns regarding eyesore land or buildings, they can contact Thanet District Council, the Town Clerk or the relevant Ward Councillor.

Over the past year, there have been two significant developments that have attracted public interest: application 19/0813 - Club Union Convalescent Home in Reading Street which has gone to appeal and R/TH/20/0174 - a large development in Poorhole Lane, for which the application for Reserved Matters is awaiting decision.



BROADSTAIRS & ST. PETER'S
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Annual Town Assembly 16 March 2020

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Annual Town Assembly, due to be held on the 16th March 2020, was cancelled. Members of the public were asked to submit their questions via email so that they could be answered by a panel of Councillors.

Please find below the list of questions submitted and the Town Council response:

1. *Why do the CT10 Parochial Charities refuse to answer legitimate questions from a CT10 resident?*

The Town Council cannot respond on behalf of the Charity. Please be aware that CT10 Parochial Charities is the result of an amalgamation of charities - C for Culmers and T for Taddy's – that was carried out around the time that postcodes were introduced. Whilst it may appear by name to be a public organisation for Broadstairs & St Peter's, it is not, and therefore there is no automatic right for any CT10 or other resident to have information from the charity, unless in accordance with the Charity Commission or other regulatory authorities.

2. *Why does the Charities' website not include the information about the trustees as shown on the Charity Commission's website?*

The Town Council cannot answer any questions with regard to the website of the CT10 Parochial Charities. However we understand there is no legal requirement for any Charity to declare the information you request on their own website.

3. *Is there a requirement under the constitution of the Charities for the Town Council to appoint four trustees?*

The Town Council cannot answer questions regarding the constitution of the Charity as this is an entirely separate entity. However we have been informed that it is in the Charity's constitution.

Traditionally, the names of four Trustees have been put forward by the Town Council every 4 years, but there is no obligation for these to be councillors, officers or in any way connected with the Town Council.

4. *If any of the four appointees resign from their trustee post, is the Town Council required to replace them?*

Yes, Cllr Roy Dexter has recently resigned and the Town Council has appointed a replacement, Cllr Roger Binks who expressed an interest in the role, for the remainder of the current 4 year period, this decision was made in January and can be found in the Finance and General Purpose minutes on the Town Council website.

5. How long has this arrangement been in place?

The Charity will be in the best position to answer this question but the Town Council has only been in place in its current form, since the 1972 Local Government Act.

6. Do these Town Council appointees have to be councillors or employees?

No, see response to question 3 above.

7. Are these appointments made after mutual agreement?

The Town Council appoints the representatives at a meeting attended by all Councillors. But, prior to the meeting the Charity gives guidance as to the role and the type of individual that they would need to be a representative, i.e. someone who can attend daytime meetings.

8. Could the Charities refuse to accept a Town Council appointee?

See above.

9. One of the appointees lists an additional trustee post of the Broadstairs Youth and Leisure Centre. Is this still valid as Retort House is now a Town Council asset?

The Town Council cannot respond to questions regarding an individual's other personal and private interests or connections. However, the Broadstairs Youth and Leisure Centre Trust is still a valid trust, although they no longer play a role in Retort House. This question would need to be directed to both the Broadstairs Youth and Leisure Trust and the CT10 Charities.

10. What are the benefits to the Charities and the Town Council of their close collaboration?

There is no collaboration, close or otherwise.

The Town Council is a tenant of the Charity for a parcel of land leased for the benefit of the public.

It is extremely common for some individuals to be involved in many community organisations. That does not imply any impropriety on the part of any of the four town council nominated trustees. Councillors are also bound by a Code of Conduct and any potential or actual conflict of interest is recorded and the appropriate actions taken.

11. Do these benefits outweigh the possible negative public perception of the collaboration?

The lease is in the Council's public accounts and long-standing. Every resident has the benefit of being able to walk across that land and to also see the accounts if they wish too.

12. Why does the Charities' website not give the financial information available on the Charity Commission's website?

The Town Council cannot respond on the matters of another legal entity. However it notes that there is no requirement to give this information on an organisation's own website.

13. Why are the Charities so reluctant to give information about the source of their income and the way that it is spent?

The Town Council cannot respond on the matters of another legal entity.

14. As the Charities' finances seem so healthy, why was there a need to sell the section of Culmer's Land?

The Town Council cannot respond on the matters of another legal entity.

15. How are the Charities going to use this very large additional income?

The Town Council cannot respond on the matters of another legal entity.

16. Was selling the land within the terms of the original 1495 bequest?

The Town Council cannot respond on the matters of another legal entity.

17. On 14 January 2020 at a Broadstairs Society meeting, the Chair of the trustees explained that the area of Culmer's Land that they had sold had been neglected by the Town Council and allowed to become overgrown, used for fly tipping and antisocial behaviour. I had previously understood that the land had not formed part of the Culmer's Amenity Land leased by the Town Council from the Charities and therefore had remained the responsibility of the Charities. Which organisation was responsible for that area of Culmer's Land in the years before May 2018?

The Town Council was responsible as tenant for the land until 2013. Thereafter and during several years of re-negotiation of the lease, the Charity was responsible.

The land had been tenanted by an allotment holder but due to the difficulty of the terrain, the tenant left the land and no other tenant was willing to take it on.

18. Why was it neglected and allowed to become so unpleasant?

See above.

19. I have been told that several decades ago there was a plan to by-pass Albion Street and the lower High Street by building roads through Culmer's Land from Alexandra Road and Nelson Place to Vere Road. This plan met with vigorous local opposition and was dropped. Would it be possible to read the Town Council records about this plan, the grounds for the opposition and how the decision was reached?

This was in the 1980s and would have involved TDC as the Local Planning Authority and Kent County Council. The Town Council was the tenant for the land at the time and it is likely it would have been a consultee. So, it is likely that the Town Council does hold some information in the archive of minutes.

Any member of the public is allowed to request to view these minutes, but they are not allowed to leave the Town Council offices as they are a matter of public record and must be retained as part of the constitution of the Town Council.

20. Why did a trustee of the Charities state at the 2018 Town Assembly that there was 'no intention to build' on Culmer's Land when that trustee could reasonably be expected to have known that outline planning permission had been obtained to build houses and the sale of that site to a property developer was already in progress?

Please address this question to the relevant individual. However, it should be noted that the area of Culmer's Amenity Land that the Town Council would retain as part of the lease, no longer included the piece of land nearest to the Alexandra Road.

21. Why are the Charities so opposed to Culmer's Land being listed as a Local Green Space in the Neighbourhood Development Plan and TDC Local Plan?

The Town Council cannot respond on the matters of another legal entity. However, the comments they made against the plan can be found on the Consultation pages of the Thanet District Council website www.consult.thanet.gov.uk

22. Why are the Charities so determined to maintain the value of Culmer's Land if there is no intention to sell it for building development in the future?

The Town Council cannot respond on the matters of another legal entity.

23. What is the Town Council's view on a misleading statement being given by an official of an organisation at a public meeting like an Annual Town Assembly?

The Annual Town Assembly is convened for residents to have the opportunity to ask questions of the Council and Councillors on issues relating to the Town Council's work.

It is not the forum for questions relating to the affairs of other organisations and they should be neither accepted nor answered. Councillors are present at the Assembly as representatives of the Council and no other organisation.

