

TownTalk



News and views from Bury St Edmunds Town Council

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BURY ST EDMUNDS
TOWN COUNCIL

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Chairman's introduction



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Our April edition of TownTalk and the Annual Report were intended to bring people up to date about what the Town Council is doing. Over 50 organisations helped us to circulate these via e-mail and it is also especially pleasing to know that people have stopped to read these documents which are on display at the Council offices – don't forget, if you want a printed copy we will be happy to provide one.

In past years summer has tended to be a quieter time for Council but this year there have been many key topics to keep us busy. Some may seem as if they have been around for a long time and we are anxious to finalise them. As you will read, a lot has happened regarding allotments; we have been considering how best to consult people about what they pay for our current services and what it might cost to provide more; we have been planning our move of offices when the lease expires; Christmas is not that far away which means that we are again involved in supporting the town's display of lights. A great amount has and will be happening on the community front.

We are saying farewell to our Town Clerk and the responsibility for the role will be temporarily carried out by Sue Hindry. This obviously leaves us with a depleted staff and the need to concentrate on our priorities so please bear with us until a full appointment is made.

As always, we welcome and need your feedback. It has been good to see some new faces at our public meetings which are open to all – it is your views that count so don't be afraid to make them known.

D Nettleton
Chairman and Councillor for
Risbygate ward

Where to next?

In 2003 the Town Council was based in the Manor House on Honey Hill and in 2006 it moved to its present location. By the end of this year its current lease will expire and we will once again make the journey to somewhere new. Those of you who have moved home or office will know the tensions that this experience brings – will the deal go thorough, will there be a last minute hitch?

Within this edition we are not yet able to tell you where we are moving to but over the past months we have been exploring available options. Some have attractions but also have disadvantages, so it is a case of pursuing the best option, taking

account of all the important factors – location, cost, size, permanence, technology, access, etc. It is not just about moving, we want somewhere that suits your needs as well as those of Councillors and staff. So, watch this space and follow the removal lorry at the end of the year.

Heritage Open Days

In September 2009 as part of an annual national celebration of England's cultural and architectural heritage, Heritage Open Days were again staged in Bury St Edmunds. The event is coordinated by the Civic Trust and involves the opening of interesting buildings, some of which are not normally open to the public. The Town Council was proud to play its part in this by charting the history of the town's governance which was displayed in the Guildhall, one of the town's oldest buildings.



The Guildhall (courtesy of the Jarman Collection, the Bury St Edmunds Past and Present Society, www.BuryPastAndPresent.org.uk)

It is fascinating to learn of the events and problems of the past, many of which seem to return in a different shape in our current era.

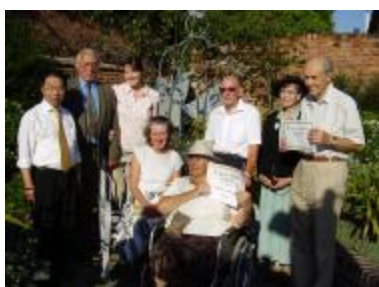
Top of the crops

The Town Council staged its first Allotments Competition, covering all of the town's 225 allotment plots. All the tenants were eligible for the category of the Best Allotment Plot and on a hot day in August members of the Judging Panel trudged the plots picking out those that had the 'wow' factor.



In addition they selected the Most Environmentally Friendly Allotment Plot. Overall they discovered a good standard amongst the majority of plots. They were however disappointed that several had become neglected and lacked cultivation, depriving those on the waiting list of an opportunity – Council will continue its tough stance to take action against people who are not meeting the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement.

On 19 August, 13 tenants who had been shortlisted in the two categories, each accompanied by a guest, joined the Judges, Councillors and staff at a presentation event at the Town Council offices. Cllr Stefan Oliver, Council's Allotments Champion was able to pay tribute to those who topped the list and to present vouchers kindly donated by Marlow's Garden Centre to the winners, Mr Jim Bowden and Mr Euan Allen.



This year's success has been apparent, demonstrating the extent

of effort put in by tenants, staff and the support given by Councillors. It is hoped that the Competition will become an annual event.

Turning over the soil

Issues relating to the allotments seem to have been ongoing for a considerable period of time. So, to bring you up to date, Cllr Stefan Oliver was able to provide £3,000 from his locality budget whilst a County Council and this has been directed at a programme of maintenance and improvement spread across all the sites. Council has also been assisted by a group of volunteers from Tayfen House as part of their efforts to maintain their skills and resettle into the community.



This combination of funding and voluntary support has meant that a lot has been accomplished including repairs to fences, trimming and hedges, levelling driveways. There is further good news in that other parts of the programme can still be dealt with, for example improving the surface areas at entrances at Cotton Lane.

Council's desire to acquire additional allotment land might appear to have been slow but behind the scenes talks have been ongoing concerning an offer to lease additional land at Cotton Lane, to learn what is intended from a 'section 106' agreement between the Borough Council and a developer and how we respond to an offer to purchase land at Sicklesmere

Road. These options provide dilemmas beyond the initial financial outlay – clearance of sites, ensuring suitability of the land, complying with environment requirements and assessing the costs of ongoing maintenance and management. However, we hope that we will soon be able to announce our intentions.

True Grit

Hopefully by the winter months we will have in place over 20 grit bins at locations across the town that will meet the needs of many residents and drivers – before making our decisions we invited people to provide their views. Some additional bins have been purchased via Cllr Stefan Oliver's County Council locality budget and all the bins will be positioned in places that fall within County and Borough Councils' guidelines.

Acts of Remembrance

Each year the Town Council is represented at services and events within the town to commemorate those who have been killed in action whilst giving service to their Country. Council is proud to have the responsibility for maintaining the War Memorials on Angel Hill and in the Butter Market. This year the Country has lost a huge number of members of our armed forces, some very close to home, and we would urge you to show your respect at the eleventh hour on 11 November and if you can to attend occasions of remembrance to do so.

St Edmund's Day

We hope to resume St Edmund's Day Awards, giving recognition to those who have made an outstanding contribution within the community. The calendar date to commemorate the town's patron saint is 20 November, so be sure to log on to our website nearer that date to find out more.

Christmas is coming

Another topic that seems to return far too quickly and reminds us that we are another year older until we enter into the magic of Christmas and roll back the years! Amid the doom and gloom that fills our daily lives it is important that we look to our many reasons to be cheerful. The Christmas lights and switch-on event bring a great deal to the town – pleasure for all ages, support for businesses and a wonderful place to visit. So put the date in your diary – Thursday 19 November 2009 and look at the websites of the Town Council's and its partner organisations nearer the date for further information.



So what does the Council do for us?

Sounds like a Monty Python question. Well, yes, the Town Council does take on board public concerns. Various objections to planning and licensing matters have received Council's support; we have lent weight to criticisms about the towns bus and train services; considered the unsightliness of wheelie bins; made representations about the shopping link and the town's new venue and supported safer neighbourhood initiatives.

Councillors continue to be active in their wards and on the various bodies and at events where they represent Council. It is sometimes overlooked that the work they undertake is in their own time and unpaid.

Learning about Windows

When Paula Gladwell, our Administration Assistant started work she was asked if she was familiar with 'Windows'. She has since proved very proficient on her computer but was probably a bit surprised when she became responsible for the monthly themed display in the Town Council's office window!

She has demonstrated tremendous artistic flair and an ability to create something out of nothing which has brought her and Council great acclaim from passers by. Working in partnership with other organisations her efforts have included themes of health (NHS), community safety (police), communication (Radio West Suffolk), education (West Suffolk College); Hidden Gardens, Bury in Bloom and Allotments. All this has been done on a shoestring but Paula's efforts have done much to communicate vital information on what is happening and in a way that complements the information placed on our website and the town's notice boards.

Next time you are in Guildhall Street have a look for yourself.



Keeping you informed

www.burystedmunds.suffolk.gov.uk is our website which should tell you all you need to know about the Town Council. Did you know that amongst the town councils in Suffolk it is the most frequently used. That's good news for us but we realise that some people cannot or may not wish to log on – don't worry because everything that we provide online can be provided on request in hard copy.

How to make contact

All Town Councillors can be contacted via the below telephone numbers (dial 01284 before the number shown), by e-mail and some have mobile or business telephone numbers as shown on www.burystedmunds.suffolk.gov.uk. The website also shows how members of staff can be contacted.

¹ Roy Bebbington	706981
² Keith Bird	763689
³ Hung Chow Chung (known as Patrick Chung)	761120
⁴ Robert (Bob) Cockle	756249
⁵ James Dinsdale*	07940 53626
⁶ Paul Farmer	768777
⁷ Allan Jones	756415
⁸ Allen Lloyd*	07904 209419
⁹ Edward Lockwood	711698 [#]
¹⁰ Michele Lockwood	711698 [#]
¹¹ Stefan Oliver	706172
¹² David Nettleton	702212
¹³ Richard Rout	767494
¹⁴ Paul Simner	768202
¹⁵ Clive Springett	753120
¹⁶ Patricia Warby	704138
¹⁷ Kevin Waterson	764804

1, 15 and 16:	Moreton Hall ward
2 and 5:	Westgate ward
3 and 17:	Minden ward
4 and 10:	St Olaves ward
6 and 13:	Abbeygate ward
7 and 8:	Southgate ward
9:	Northgate ward
11:	Eastgate ward
12 and 14:	Risbygate ward

[#]dial 01638 before this number