

## **Annual Town Assembly 15 March 2021**

### **Environmental Issues and Housing Development**

I'd like to ask questions about the environmental impact of housing development in our town. It is unfortunate that Culmer's Land should have to feature in four consecutive Annual Town Assemblies but events over the past three years have raised several important issues. This large green space in the heart of Broadstairs has psychological, historical and environment significance for many residents.

At the Town Assembly in 2018, a trustee of the CT10 Parochial Charities voiced a very strong objection to Culmer's Land being designated a Local Green Space in the TDC Local Plan. He was extremely concerned that such 'action could devalue the land, although there was no intention to build on it'. However, only two months later the area of Culmer's Land next to Alexandra Road was boarded up and controversial site clearance began.

By 2020, a natural green space, providing a biodiverse habitat, had been replaced by a barren, paved landscape. It is very good to see that a hedge has recently been planted along the boundary of the housing development, apparently on the Amenity Land, as a small token of mitigation.

**Was this planting arranged and paid for by the developer as was previously part of the original outline planning permission?**

**No it was arranged and paid for by the Town Council**

**Did the CT10 Parochial Charities plant this hedge to enhance the biodiversity of the Amenity Land?**

**No, but the Town Council did.**

**Was the hedge the initiative of another organisation, paid for by private or public funding?**

**As above**

**Is there a plan to plant additional hedging along the land between the footpath and the allotment boundary fence?**

**Not to my knowledge**

The whole development process took place veiled in secrecy without any attempt to keep the residents of the town informed. In response to questions asked last year instead of a public Annual Town Assembly, the Town Council explained the relationship between itself and the CT10 Parochial charities. In accordance with the constitution of the Charities, '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.' This implies that there is some sort of constitutional partnership between the two organisations but the Town Council stated that, 'There is no collaboration, close or otherwise.' between them.

This seems to be both surprising and unfortunate because if there had been effective cooperation about this housing development, the whole process might have had a better environmental outcome.

**Could the Town Council explain what their current relationship is with the CT10 Parochial Charities with regard to environmental issues? This relates to Culmer's Land and other land managed by the Charities, for example, Taddy's Land.**

**The Town Council invited four individuals to be trustees. They agreed to take on this voluntary role and were subsequently appointed trustees to the charity in 2017. They are Jenny Matterface, who is now a past Town Councillor, Jeff Kirkpatrick, past Town Councillor and Mayor, Roy Dexter, a current Town Councillor and Christine Chappell, the Deputy Town Clerk. Cllr. Dexter stepped down as a Trustee in early 2020 and Cllr. Roger Binks came forward and agreed to be appointed as his replacement. It is my understanding that these appointments expire this summer.**

Fortunately, the Town Council has established a proactive Environmental Action Group. It has also appointed an excellent Tree Warden who has written a very detailed Tree Strategy. It appears that there has been effective liaison with the developer of the Westwood Lodge site, resulting in the preservation of many established trees and a plan to plant a large number of new trees in mitigation for the loss of others. There are many sites within the CT10 boundary where housing developments are likely to take place. For example, South Cliff Parade, Lanthorne Road, North Foreland Road and Reading Street.

**Is the Town Council going to establish the same type of liaison with developers of these, and any future sites, with regard to environmental issues?**

**The Town Council's Planning Committee will continue to submit comments on local planning applications to the Local Planning Authority as is their legal right. These comments will incorporate recommendations concerning environmental issues which the committee feels appropriate.**

Many residents are hoping that housing development within the town will be managed with more awareness of environmental issues in the future.

St Peter's Ward resident



BROADSTAIRS & ST. PETER'S  
TOWN COUNCIL

Broadstairs and St. Peter's Town Council  
Annual Town Assembly Report 15 March 2021  
Council Report by the Mayor Cllr Paul Moore

**i) Councillors**

Broadstairs and St. Peter's Town Council has 15 elected 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.

The Town Council has 5 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

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

An Environmental Working Group has been developing an action plan for the town over the last year and we hope to share some of those ideas with you soon.

**iii) Staff**

Danielle Dunn left the post of Town Clerk in October to pursue other projects and spend more time with her family. However, we continue to take advantage of her planning skills and knowledge and she is currently overseeing the updating of the Neighbourhood Plan. In January we welcomed our new Town Clerk, Kirsty Holroyd onto the team. Kirsty is an experienced Clerk and joins us from Walmer Parish Council. Kirsty is ably supported in her



role as Town Clerk by The Deputy Town Clerk, the Senior Administrator, the Mayor's Secretary/Media and Marketing Officer, the Events and Bookings Manager and a Caretaker.

2020 saw the retirement of two long-serving staff members, Marion Cleverley, Mayors Secretary and Dennis Taylor, Town Sergeant. We wish them long and happy retirements.

The Town Council is committed to staff training and sees this as an essential component in delivering the best services for the town. We would like to commend the staff on how well they coped with the sudden requirement to work from home from last March onwards. After a very brief period during which we were forced to suspend meetings and wait for the relevant legislation to be passed enabling remote meetings to take place, normal service was resumed. Council and committees continued to meet and most services have continued uninterrupted throughout the lockdown period.

I would also like to thank the Volunteer Tree Warden for her help this year, particularly with the draft tree strategy which, once approved and adopted by Council, will feed into the new Neighbourhood plan.

#### **iv) Council Tax:**

The Town Council has resolved to instruct Thanet District Council to collect a precept of £655,580 (£68.40 per year or £1.32 per week for a household paying Council Tax Band D). This represents a 0% increase on last year's Council tax..

#### **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 have been restricted this year due to the pandemic and some, such as the Civic Service and the Remembrance Service had to be cancelled completely. We are pleased to be able to hold tonight's meeting as well as the Town Forum on April 19 and the Annual Council meeting on May 17 via Zoom.

The Mayor's promotional events have been seriously curtailed, although a couple of ceremonies and events have been held remotely including Holocaust Memorial Day Ceremony which I was pleased be able to attend in order to represent the people of Broadstairs.

##### **Non Statutory:**

Phase 2 of the Pierremont Hall restoration project is now complete and the Town Council can now offer two bookable event spaces in Pierremont Hall, the Council Chamber and the

Mayor's Parlour. Our meeting suite offers two further rooms which can be hired either short or long term.

The office suites within Pierremont Hall are all now refurbished and let to various local businesses. This provides an income stream for the Council which offsets some of the Council's expenditure.

It is hoped that the refurbished Retort House community venue in the Albion Street Car Park, also now owned by the Town Council, will be open for bookings towards the summer months.

#### **vi) Policies and Business Plan**

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

During the 2020-21 civic year the Town Council has continued its work to update the Neighbourhood Plan and as part of this process is currently undertaking a Community Survey. The results of the survey will form the basis of a new 5-year business plan. If you haven't already completed the survey please see our website or contact the Town Clerk for a hard copy.

All our policies are reviewed annually as part of the Council's Internal Audit and Effective review processes.

#### **vii) Newsletter**

The Town Council now has a quarterly Newsletter and the thirteenth 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  
TOWN COUNCIL

## Broadstairs and St. Peter's Town Council Finance & General Purposes Committee Report March 2021

Cllr Rosalind Binks  
Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee

The Finance & General Purposes Committee reports to Full Council and has held 8 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.

The Leisure & Tourism Sub-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. 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, so this budget item is funded entirely from the Town Council precept.

All applications are carefully considered and the Sub-Committee may allocate smaller grants, with recommendations being made to the Finance & General Purposes Committee for grants over £2,000. It was clear early in 2020 that whilst most of the town's major events would not go ahead, much of the fundraising that helps local organisations to survive would also be impacted. The Council awarded grants totalling £27,100, of which £17,100 supported organisations and a further £10,000 was allocated to other organisations including the Salvation Army and the joint TDC Covid Fund, providing emergency support to residents and where the Council was assured that food distribution was both correctly monitored and fair.

As part of the town promotion budget, the Council normally includes summer entertainment at the bandstand, Punch & Judy on Viking Bay beach, floral arrangements around the town and November 5<sup>th</sup> fireworks. The various events were generally not possible in the past year, but the bandstand kiosk (which is leased from Thanet District Council) was able to operate. The Town Council did not pay TDC for extended opening hours of the toilets and the beach lift as they were closed during much of the past year.

The Allotments & Land Sub-Committee oversees the Town Council's two allotment sites, Norman Road and Prospect Road, as well as Mockett's Wood in St. Peter's and parkland 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.

The Town Council takes on various projects and activities. Facing the immediate challenge of a large influx of visitors in the early summer last year, the Council decided to engage security to encourage social distancing on our beaches and promenade. This initiative commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> June and continued until early September at a cost of approximately £20,000 and proved both effective and generally popular with residents. Thanet District Council subsequently followed our lead and engaged further security for other Thanet beaches, all successfully co-ordinated with police, ambulance, Southeastern Railway and Transport Police. It is early days but very likely that this will be repeated during the coming summer. Sadly it is also necessary for the Town Council to provide year-round security in Pierremont Park to help protect the town's assets and a room is provided within Pierremont Hall for them to monitor our CCTV cameras.

Council maintenance in the past year included Town Trail notice boards and other street furniture as well as purchasing new decorative lighting for the promenade at Viking Bay. There is a continual problem with lighting as it has for many years been connected to the TDC-owned lamps which are now in serious need of overhaul.

The Council recognises that environmental issues are of interest and importance to our residents and has set up the Environment Working Party. This group has been actively looking at ways to improve the town's environmental footprint. With considerable input from the Town's volunteer Tree Warden, the Group has initiated several projects from the planting of trees to establishing swift boxes. The Town Council has also moved to a Green Energy provider for the buildings in Pierremont Park. However, the Council is also mindful that we have a legal duty to our residents to ensure Value for Money and accordingly all financial decisions are carefully considered.

On behalf of the Members of the Finance & General Purposes Committee I would like to put on record our sincere thanks to the former Town Clerk, Danielle Dunn and all the Staff for their invaluable work over the past year and also welcome our new Town Clerk, Kirsty Holroyd, who has been with us since early January. All have continued to work untiringly for the residents of Broadstairs & St Peter's, in spite of the enormous inconveniences of lockdown during the past year. They have worked both from home and socially distanced in Pierremont Hall, ensuring that the Council continues to operate as normally as possible during such unusual circumstances.





BROADSTAIRS & ST. PETER'S  
TOWN COUNCIL

Broadstairs and St. Peter's Town Council  
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Community Assets Committee  
Report by Cllr Rosalind Binks

The Community Assets Committee oversees the refurbishment of Pierremont Hall, its ancillary buildings, Retort House and any potential purchases or transfers of community assets to the Town Council. The Committee reports directly to Full Council and has held 7 meetings in the past financial year. Since building projects often require rapid decisions, the Committee has delegated spending limits and powers, currently extended until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

During the past year, the Town Council offices have occupied part of the top floor of Pierremont Hall with 4 office suites of various sizes fully leased to tenants. Both the Music Room and The Cottage are also in use by tenants. The refurbished Hall also has two function rooms (Council Chamber and Mayor's Parlour), kitchen and toilet facilities. Both function rooms have been in a variety of uses in the past year, albeit limited by the lockdown.

Phase 2 of the Pierremont project on the southern wing has now been completed and provides the Stella Maris office suite and 2 meeting rooms, together with an onsite facility for our security providers. A new tenant will be occupying the Stella Maris office suite shortly. You will have seen that the external fire escape has been removed and a ramp for disabled access has now been installed. External landscaping needs to be completed which will complement use of the Council Chamber function room and also help conceal the unattractive but very necessary ramp. Phase 3 will be the complete refurbishment of the Hall's basement. This alone is a considerable project and is not planned for the coming financial year.

Parking spaces are now fully allocated for tenants, council officers and visitors. There is also one space for use by tenants for charging electric cars.

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. However the opening of Retort House has been considerably delayed by the need to upgrade the power supply to the building. We are now urgently seeking completion of the necessary works so that we can get the Community Venue back into use and the tenant can open as soon as possible once restrictions are lifted.



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

As Chairman of the Community Assets Committee I would like to thank the Committee Members, Council Officers and all those who have supported these projects in many ways over the past year. I must give special thanks to the former Town Clerk Danielle Dunn, who worked tirelessly to overcome the numerous challenges that the Pierremont project threw at her and also the Deputy Town Clerk, Christine Chappell, who continues to meet the many challenges with Retort House. I have every confidence that our new Town Clerk, Kirsty Holroyd, will show equal fortitude when problems arise, as I am sure they will.

Cllr Rosalind Binks, Chairman - Community Assets Committee



## Annual Report of the work of Broadstairs and St Peters Planning Committee

15th March 2021

Cllr Jill Bayford

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.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, only 10 actual meetings were called. These were held remotely using the Microsoft Team software. Committee members were asked to submit their comments in April and May so that they could be fed back to TDC.

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 and 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 information documents, including the Kent Design Guide, Thanet District Council Planning Guidance Leaflets, which cover extending your home, shop design, security shutters, outdoor advertisements and signs and flat conversions, plus the Broadstairs & St Peter's Town Design Statement as well as the draft Broadstairs & St Peter's Neighbourhood Plan that will become an integral component of the Thanet District Council Local Plan that was adopted on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

Over the past year, Town Council planning meetings considered a total of 272 applications, a decrease of 17% on 2019 to 2020.

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 52 recommendations for refusal, 11% fewer than last year. 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 86 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 Volunteer Tree Warden, Karen McKenzie, reviews applications that involve tree works and if concerned about the proposal brings them to the Committee's attention for consideration at meetings through the relevant ward councillor 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. The tree applications considered this year were 43% higher than in 2019 – 2020. 28 were recommended for refusal, an increase of 56% on the previous year.

Over the past year, there have been two significant developments that have attracted public interest:

Application 20/0591 Kingsgate College – Change of use from college (use class C2) to residential (use class C3) together with ground, first and second floor extensions with creation of terraces, alterations to roof including raising of height and insertion of dormer windows and alterations to fenestration to provide 15No 2 bed and 3No 3 bed flats with associated bin and cycle stores, parking and landscaping. Removal of chimney stacks.

Application 20/0174/GR Westwood Lodge, Poorhole Lane – Reserved matters application pursuant to permission OL/TH/15/0788 (Outline application for the erection of 153 dwellings with all matters reserved) for the approval of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.

Additionally, application 19/0813 - Club Union Convalescent Home in Reading St, previously refused by TDC, was granted on appeal in October 2020.