

Cinque Port Town of New Romney



Town Clerk's Office
Town Hall
New Romney
Kent TN28 8BT

TOWN AND PARISH OF NEW ROMNEY NOTICE OF ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Town Meeting of the above named Town is to be held **remotely** on **WEDNESDAY 28TH APRIL 2021** commencing at 7.30 pm.

Only such persons as are registered as Local Government Electors for the Town will be entitled to vote at the meeting, but the meeting will be open to the public during the proceedings unless the Town Meeting, by Resolution, should otherwise direct.

WELCOME

1. Apologies
2. To receive and approve the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Thursday 30th May 2019.
3. To receive the Annual Report of the Town Council for 2020/2021 – including, if available, update in respect of the Community Hall and Sports Pavilion project - and respond to any questions as may be put thereon.
4. To receive and note written questions submitted by registered Local Government Electors and written responses supplied.
5. To receive the report of the County Councillor for the Romney Marsh Electoral Division, if available.
6. To receive the reports of the Folkestone & Hythe District Councillors representing New Romney.
7. To consider Resolutions, of which written notice has been delivered to the Town Clerk not less than one clear working day before the day of the Annual Assembly.
8. Pride of New Romney Awards 2020 /2021 – to be presented 'virtually' by the Town Mayor
9. KALC (Kent Association of Local Councils) Community Award 2020 – to be presented 'virtually' by the Town Mayor

DATED THIS 21ST DAY OF APRIL 2021

Mrs C Newcombe
Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Town Hall
New Romney
TN28 8BT

PLEASE NOTE: *The afore-mentioned meeting will be held remotely and will commence at 7.30pm.*

Members of Public are welcome to join this Zoom meeting live using the relevant meeting invitation link.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94602033309?pwd=NG9aNndabFMxZlRkaDhwcUY1T051dz09>

Meeting ID: 946 0203 3309

Passcode: 849288

AGENDA ITEM 2

MINUTES
of
The Annual Town Meeting
of New Romney Town Council
held in the Assembly Rooms, Church Approach, New Romney
on Thursday 30th May 2019 commencing at 7.30pm

PRESENT:

The Right Worshipful The Mayor of New Romney
Councillor P D Thomas

Town Ward

Councillors: Rev Cn S McLachlan, Mrs B Lonbay Kapoor, J Phipps,
J Rivers, A Rodriguez and D Wimble

Coast Ward

Councillors: P Coe, M Hardy, Miss J M Hiscock, Mrs P Metcalfe,
Ms W Nevard, J D Picco, P D Thomas and R Tillson

In Attendance:

No Council Officers in attendance
Minutes of meeting taken by Janet Thomas

Members of the Public, including Recipients of Awards approx. 45

WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting. He stated the Council is currently operating with restricted Council Officers. He thanked Sue Hall and Councillors for covering the office.

The Mayor stated the meeting would take a new format in response to recent comments from the public.

Reference St Nicholas Church – Reverend John Richardson
There has been vandalism and theft from wall boxes in the church this week. Part of the church had been set on fire. While investigations are taking place the church will remain closed in the daytime, apart from planned services.

The Mayor asked all present to keep the meeting respectful.

PRAYERS

Reverend John Richardson opened the proceedings with prayers.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from:
Councillor Mrs P Rolfe for personal reasons: and
Kent County Councillor A Hills who was attending another meeting.

It was:

PROPOSED BY: Sue Davies
SECONDED BY: Ellan Crooks

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that the reasons for absence, as detailed above, be received and noted.

Councillors introduced themselves in turn.

2. MINUTES

It was

PROPOSED BY: Carolyn Wood-Brignall
SECONDED BY: Pam Meller

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 23rd April 2018 be received and approved.

Councillors M Hardy, Mrs B Lonbay Kapoor, Miss W Nevard and D Wimble abstained from voting as they had not been present at the meeting.

3. TO RECEIVE PRESENTATIONS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS

The Mayor then invited representatives of local Community Groups to update Councillors and members of the public about their activities.

Organisations represented:

Rolfe Lane Residents Association	Patricia Rayner
Old School Trust	Pat Goodsell
New Romney Football Club	Tony Hunter
Annual Lantern Parade	Caroline Wire
Fifth Continent	Dawn Apcar

Janet Thomas, 1st New Romney Scout Group, then updated and thanked the whole community on the amazing success of the inter-generational, living history - Centenary Poppy Commemoration Project.

4. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

A copy of the Annual Report had been previously circulated to Councillors and made available to members of the public at the meeting.

The Mayor apologised that it had not been possible to place the Annual Report on the Town Council website ahead of the Annual Town Meeting this year. This would be addressed for the next Annual Report.

The Mayor reported on the progress of the Community Hall and Sports Pavilion. The Contract had been approved on 28th March 2019; the Planning Application submitted and awaiting approval. The Costings were explained and the provision to cover these costs outlined.

Cllr Picco stated the costs included renovation of Seashells Nursery.

Cllr Lonbay Kapoor asked about the Timeline for Building. It was expected the new facility would be available for community use in 2021.

Attention drawn to the New Romney Socio Economic Plan, a 5 year rolling area plan, very comprehensive and user friendly.

A question was asked, by a member of the public, about the Barrier on the Coastal Car Park. It was reported that New Romney Town Council had sent a letter to Folkestone and Hythe District Council re position; restricted access and British Standards Compliance. The Mayor was meeting with Andy Blaszkowicz, - Assistant Director – Environment and Corporate Assets, on 18th June to understand concerns and resolve issues.

Policy and Plan Review Document – Planning Inspector, identified no provision has been made within the Folkestone/Hythe area for Traveller Sites and it does need to be included.

New Romney Town Council was asked if there are plans to limit access to St Martin's Field for Travellers. It was responded that the Council recognised the Field is an asset to the Town and was currently working to resolve this issue.

A member of the public made a request to clarify the £4000 cost of maintaining St Martin's Field. The Mayor explained Councillors are Trustees of St Martin's Field, costs cover maintenance, pollarding trees and replacing bins.

A question was asked, by a member of the public, about the replacement of the bench which had been set on fire on St Martin's Field. There had been a crowd funding campaign and the Mayor agreed to contact those involved to clarify the situation.

A resident stated physical barriers were not always the best way to prevent incursions. It was stated Document – Additional PSVOs -August 2019 was the legal route for managing Traveller Incursions.

A resident asked if the Town Council had any plans to limit access to the area. The Mayor replied there would be a working group researching the most effective method.

There were no further questions arising.

5. REPORT OF KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Having received apologies from Kent County Councillor A Hills, there was no written report. The Mayor stated a comprehensive report had been received from Councillor Hills on a monthly basis.

6. REPORT OF FOLKESTONE & HYTHE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

(i) Councillor D Wimble

Councillor D Wimble's report was duly received and noted by those present.

(ii) Councillor P Rolfe

A report had not been received from Councillor Rolfe

7. REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LIBRARIAN

A report had not been received from the Community Development Librarian.

8. REPORT OF THE KENT POLICE

A report had not been received from the Kent Police.

9. WRITTEN NOTICE OF RESOLUTIONS

- (i) That (i) New Romney Town Council should fund the supply, installation and on-cost in re-emptying of Dog Waste Bins outside Fairfield Road Recreation Ground in (a) Rolfe Lane and (b) Ashford Road.
That (ii) New Romney Town Council, with the help of its residents, identify strategic locations around the Town where litter bins should be provided for the benefit of residents and visitors to help keep the environment clear of litter and dog waste and to approach the District Council to request that bins be provided in these strategic locations and waste deposited in such bins be collected and disposed of by the District Council.***

***Proposed by Rolfe Lane Residents Association
Presented by Councillor John Rivers***

Councillor Picco stated this would be a matter for the Amenities Committee. A discussion outlined various viewpoints including the need to educate people to place litter in bins; strategic areas where bins are needed and some councils encouraging people to take responsibility for litter by removing bins.

Resolution Part (i) – 18 residents in favour

Resolution Part (ii) – 22 residents in favour

- (ii) ***That New Romney Town Council does not purchase and install surveillance and audio equipment in the Council Chamber.***

Proposed by Councillor Wendy Nevard

A discussion noted several reasons for and against supporting the resolution. The cost of installation was mentioned; aspects of Health and Safety considered and the level of scrutiny at meetings.

A vote was taken among councillors – Not in favour of the resolution – 8

10. PRIDE OF NEW ROMNEY AWARDS

The winners of this year's Awards, who had been selected from all nominations received, were announced at the meeting and received their respective Awards from the present Mayor. The winners were:

Eric Brown – Litter Picking Watch, Romney Marsh for outstanding service to the Community by an individual.

The 1st New Romney Scout Group for service to the Community by a local organisation.

Evan Maguire, A Star in Heaven, for outstanding bravery shown by a young person. Collected by his parents Phil and Rebecca Maguire.

The 'Mayoral Star' award winner, personally chosen by the Mayor, was presented to Charlie Davies - Littlestone Lifeboat Operations Manager and crew member for 46 years.

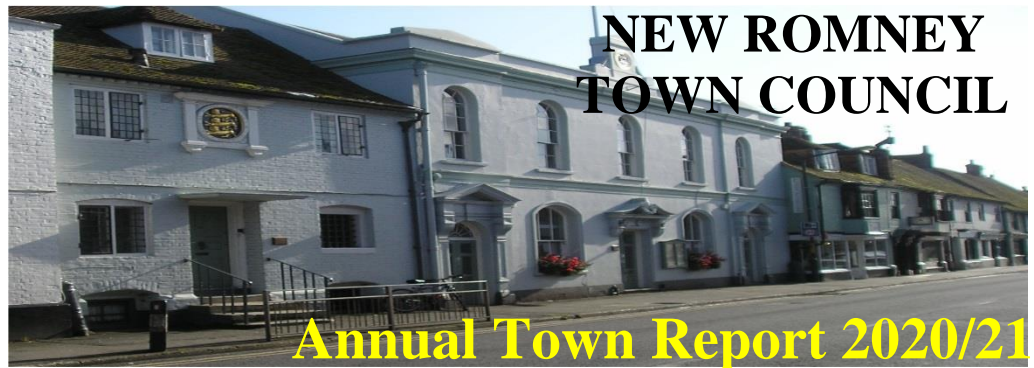
THANKS

The Mayor thanked everyone present for attending.

The meeting then concluded at 9.40pm

NB Copies of all reports and documents referred to within these Minutes are available for perusal by members of the Council and the public on request to the Town Clerk at the Town Hall

Minutes prepared by Janet Thomas



www.newromney-tc.gov.uk

town.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk

INTRODUCTION FROM THE TOWN MAYOR 2020-21



Welcome to this Annual Town Meeting of New Romney Town Council for the year 2020/21.

The last 13 months have been the most difficult time for New Romney outside of the war years. We have battled against the Covid-19 virus and its impact on families in New Romney has been significant. We mourn the loss of a number of relatives, friends and acquaintances. We find ourselves living with the impact of this terrible virus, not only those suffering with long covid but also those living with its financial and mental health impact.

Since March 2019, so many people have gone the extra mile to help the most vulnerable members of our community. I would like to thank the Care Home staff, local Doctors' surgeries staff, NHS workers in local hospitals, Carers in the community, all of whom have put their lives on the line to help others. We can't forget the efforts of our local supermarkets, High Street

shops and Pharmacies who stayed open during the pandemic and provided life-saving support to those residents who were shielding and vulnerable. Thank you to the keyworkers, postal service and Voluntary organisations who continue to support the community – Counselling, youth organisations, Rotary, Royal British Legion, Dementia groups and adults with additional needs. Central to these efforts was the Romney Marsh Community Support Hub. Jon Wilson, his staff and volunteers provided an invaluable service to the community to ensure the most vulnerable residents had their medication, food and essentials to survive the pandemic.

We must now look to the future. In New Romney, we will be moving forward with the next phase of the Community Hall/Sports Pavilion, which has progressed slowly behind the scenes during the pandemic. We have installed steel bollards around St Martins Field to prevent anti-social activities & unlawful encampments. We are taking over the dilapidated Station Road play-area from FHDC and will upgrade the facilities to the same high standard we have on The Greens and in Fairfield Road. We are supporting a new venture to open a Wing-Surfing School, utilising the dilapidated toilet block on The Greens, which will also provide a new public toilet facility. We are pleased to support the new High St commercial premises that will open in 2021, one of very few High Streets that are expanding. We have plans to upgrade the shelters on The Greens, recognising the increasing use of our seafront by visitors. We are establishing a Parish Council Highway Improvement Plan to consider road safety issues, including speed limits and parking, which will need resident input. We have dropped the ball on High St Christmas lights, utilising those that have been in use for several years but have proven to be less than inspiring, so we will put plans forward to address that in the coming year.

I would like to thank our Council staff who have continued to work remotely throughout the pandemic; our Councillors who have adapted to the ZOOM platform to continue to run Council business; our local school teachers and schools for remaining open; Eric Brown & the Litter Pickers for their support and

tireless efforts to keep the town, beaches and countryside litter free. I would also like to personally thank a few younger people who continue to demonstrate that New Romney is “the little town with a big heart”, Sadie, at Savage’s greengrocers, Katie, in Deblyn’s, Louise, at That Pet Shop and Hannah & Sarah at Bakery 64 as they continue to provide an invaluable service to the town.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor for 2020-21, Councillor Paul Thomas



TOWN COUNCIL SUCCESS STORIES

2020-2021 has been another busy and productive year for New Romney Town Council, despite the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, with further improvements to the locality for the benefit of residents and the large-scale Community Hall and Sports Pavilion project progressing slowly in the background. Once again, there is too much to mention within a single report, however, during the past year there have, as always, been a number of successes that are definitely worthy of highlighting:

- **RESPONDING TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

New Romney Town Council is extremely proud of its swift and continuing response to the Coronavirus Pandemic. Right at the start of the national health emergency, the Town Council was quick to take action: First and foremost, by becoming involved, both financially and in practical terms, in the setting up of the New Romney Support Hub which has played such a central role in supporting the whole community throughout the pandemic. Simultaneously, arrangements were quickly put in place to issue all Councillors and Officers with electronic devices and provide appropriate peer training that would enable the continuation of Town Council business by remote means. It has not always been easy, with the expected technical glitches and learning opportunities along the way – but everyone has adapted quickly and with positivity to the ‘new way of working’ which has resulted in the Town Council being able, not only to continue engaging in routine business but, also, to progress some significant projects to improve our locality. The Town Council has also pro-actively taken on the role of ‘signposting’ local residents towards a range of information and support organisations throughout the pandemic, with a substantial increase in information regularly posted on social media and the Town Council website. Not only this, but the Town Council acted very swiftly to put in place risk assessments, signage and other measures, including regular, routine cleansing of equipment, to ensure that all of its open space amenities could continue to be enjoyed safely by the public, particularly in light of the increased need for fresh air and exercise for the sake of general well-being, during the pandemic.

- **CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL!**

In the past year, New Romney Town Council has actually been heading up its own internal campaigns to improve access to its services and premises, to be supportive of those dealing with dementia, to reduce its own contributions to the global climate emergency and to improve the image of the Town for residents and visitors alike by developing a Town Litter Strategy. To this end, a number of Town Council working parties were established and have been working on exploring these issues with a view to bringing appropriate recommendations back to the Council.

Accessibility

As part of New Romney Town Council’s forward planning, we commissioned a professional report looking into accessibility issues of premises under the control of NRTC.

Once the report was received, we set up a working party with a small team of Councillors to look into its findings and to assess what we could do to improve public access to the Town Hall and the Assembly Rooms and some aspects of the High Street.

We wanted to ensure that everyone had equal opportunity to visit and take part in our Town and NRTC business.

As the buildings are all listed, some changes cannot be considered, but the working party has identified many easy fix items that could be carried out at little or no cost using our Town Caretaker and his assistant.

The Town Council had already secured two disabled car parking places in our high street, and they are now fully operational, we also looked into drop kerbs and pedestrian crossings with additional functions for disabled residents and visitors, these are ongoing with KCC & FHDC.

Currently our Town Hall has poor access for those of us that have difficulty with steps and stairs. In addition to some low-cost, easy fixes already mentioned, we identified some additional relatively easy fixes, changing the two Town Hall entry doors round, installing a hearing loop, with a 70/30 stable door to allow better access for wheelchair users, and altering one of the toilets into an ambulant style with additional hand rails and equipment, and a call facility for emergencies.

The biggest issue is access to the Town Hall upper chamber; currently we have a stair lift, but no flat deck for wheelchair users, we are currently asking professional lift companies for advice on this. We are planning to look into the facilities at the Assembly Rooms within the next year.

The wish list is quite large, and it is a project for the next few years, most of the changes can be made at low or nil cost which we are now taking action on – by bringing the Working Party recommendations to Full Council in the very near future.

Our end wish is that we continue to make our Town a better place for all.

Cllr John Picco

• ICT DEVELOPMENTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY!

Pre-Pandemic



Just days before we all went into the first Covid-19 lock-down, in March 2020, New Romney Town Council (NRTC) issued laptops to Councillors and staff. This was, principally, to abide by the new GDPR rules but, in effect, came at the right time in order to enable Councillors and staff to maintain safe and effective communications. It also meant that the Town Council was able to meet virtually via Zoom.

There were some teething troubles, as the pre-planned training was unable to go ahead, but, because of this forward planning by your Council, the decision- making, work and responsibilities of NRTC were all maintained, as they still are.

The Next Stage

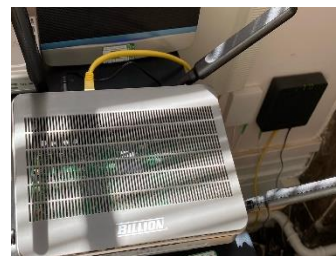
Last year, NRTC agreed to upgrade our IT system which, due to many pressures over time, was predominately 12 years old, so out of date and ineffective. Not what a modern and forward thinking Town Council could rely upon.

The Council took the bold decision to completely upgrade their IT equipment, software, and file storage capabilities, including secure backups and sharing facilities, telephony and broadband. Basically, what all current medium-sized businesses and local authorities would expect to have in place. These updates will also support our staff in being able to work as efficiently as they would like to, and save time in the process: e.g. The computer will not crash half-way through writing a report!

What is happening now?

The ultrafast broadband has now been installed. This will allow staff to be able to use the new secure Cloud storage system, work remotely when required, and generally use the internet to efficiently update our web pages and social media. It will also facilitate looking at planning applications on-line, for example, and allow us to be much greener as a Council, as we will not need to print out anywhere near as much as we once did.

Secondly, there will be new network cabling installed throughout the offices, allowing staff to make good use of all the equipment, and the internet, when required. There will also be Wi-Fi access available when needed. Staff will be using the latest laptops for their work, which will plug into the network via docking stations. This gives the Town Council built-in resilience, allowing staff to continue to work at home, when necessary, by simply taking home their laptop. The laptops will securely connect to the Cloud system, whilst being encrypted for GDPR purposes.



Thirdly, the Town Council phone system will be moving away from the traditional 'copper line' standard to an IP system (Internet Protocol), where phone calls will be managed through the internet. This will give more efficiency to staff, Councillors, and members of the public, allowing individual staff answerphones, when necessary, direct dialling (where applicable), and more 'lines' for staff to be able to use (more than two 'outside lines' when required). It also means that, once again, NRTC's resilience is increased, as these phones are mimicked on staff laptops. This means, should staff be working away from the office, not only can they use their laptops as if they were still sitting in the Town Hall, they can also use their office phone at the same time. The office number is automatically transferred to the laptop, without even the caller realising, and will maintain a good audio quality.

Summary

This investment was desperately required and the work should be completed by the end of June. It will allow NRTC to move forward in terms of efficiency and the levels of service we will be able to provide our community over time.

Cllr John Rivers

• IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LOCALITY

St. Martin's Field Protection

Following three unlawful incursions on St Martin's Field in recent times, the Town Council undertook to investigate potential methods of protection to assist in preventing future incidents and to help ensure that the field remains freely available for the enjoyment of local residents.

Various options for protecting the field were investigated, following which, quotations were then sought from a range of suppliers for supply and installation of bollards.

In the end, a local company, WeWeld, was selected to



manufacture, supply and install bollards around the perimeter of St. Martin's Field. The Town Council has worked closely with WeWeld to develop the specifications and this has resulted in a product in the adopted corporate Town colours of black and gold that has helped to maintain the openness and historic status of the area, whilst providing a robust deterrent against future incursions. The Council, in appointing WeWeld to undertake this project, was pleased to be able to support local industry, particularly in light of the financial impact of the coronavirus pandemic on local businesses and it has been particularly pleasing to receive the positive comments that have been forthcoming from local residents about the resulting installation.

Renovation of Victorian Sea Shelter

New Romney Town Council has also recently approved the full renovation of the Victorian Sea Shelter at The Greens, Littlestone. The Council is particularly keen to improve this area for the benefit of local residents and visitors alike and to provide facilities befitting of an English seaside town that welcomes tourists from far and wide. It is intended that, in due course, the nearby, more modern sea shelter will also be refurbished or replaced.

Renovation of Town Hall House Foyer and Gaol Cell areas



Work has been on-going to refurbish the entrance foyer at Town Hall House, adjacent the Town Hall. Whilst the property is, in the main, a residential property, the entrance foyer has been separated from the current tenancy to allow the Council to make provision, going forward, to re-open the Town Gaol Cell to the public for occasional visits in association with visits to the Town Hall Upper Chamber which was, of course, the Town's Courtroom in days gone by. The renovation is nearing completion and it is hoped that it will be possible to open the Courtroom and Gaol Cell to visitors on Country Fayre Day 2022.

IMPROVING LOCAL LEISURE FACILITIES AND BUILDING COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Strengthening Foundations for a New Community Hall and Sports Pavilion

Led by the Town Council's Project Steering Group and despite the Coronavirus Pandemic, work has slowly continued behind the scenes to progress the development of a new Community Hall and Sports Pavilion on the Station Road Sports Field.

The project Planning Application was formally submitted to Folkestone & Hythe District Council – the local Planning Authority, in April 2019. Since that time, the District Council, in line with its statutory obligations, consulted various stakeholders. Due to the complexity of the application, this took quite some time and the application was not, in the end, brought to the District Council Planning Committee for consideration until March 2020. The Town Council was subsequently delighted to be able to report that the application had been approved subject to planning conditions, including a s106 Agreement.



In light of the fact that formal Planning application has been granted, the Council has now been able to commence applying for grants to help fund any shortfall in the cost of the project and, having previously undertaken public consultation, will, in accordance with the subsequent formal Council

resolution, also apply for a Public Works Loan as a backstop that will guarantee delivery of this new landmark community amenity.

Moving forward, despite the impact of the pandemic on working practices, the Project Steering Group has continued to engage in legal and other negotiations in order to be able to move the project slowly forward to the next stage. Thus, in consultation with the Council's Planning Consultants, Design Team and Project Management Team, the project is now being guided through to the next stages - which involve the development of construction tendering contracts, assessment of tender applicants, and appointment of contractor.

Exciting times!

GRANT FUNDING SUPPORT

During 2020-21, New Romney Town Council has awarded grant funding as follows:

St. Martin's Field Charity	-	£4,000.00
New Romney in Bloom	-	£ 500.00
T S Veteran New Romney Sea Cadets	-	£1,500.00

COMMUNITY EVENTS

During 2020-2021, the coronavirus pandemic impacted on every aspect of community life and 2020-21 became the year of the 'Virtual Celebration'! New Romney Town Council supported a number of Community events – whether financially or in kind, including:

Virtual New Romney Country Fayre

Virtual New Romney Lantern Parade

Virtual commemorative services and / or activities: VE Day, VJ Day and Remembrance Day



THE GREENS, LITTLESTONE

The Greens, Littlestone, is an area of informal, open space which is owned and maintained by the Town Council and is made available for a range of community events and activities, including fun-fairs, fun runs and similar, as well as the very popular Emergency Services Day. Some of these events and activities benefit local organisations or charities by providing them with opportunities for fund-raising, whilst others provide entertainment for local residents.

During 2020-21, the following events took place at The Greens:

- No public events – in accordance with coronavirus pandemic legislation and guidance
-

ST. MARTIN'S FIELD, NEW ROMNEY

St. Martin's Field, New Romney, is a more formal area of open space which is owned and maintained by the Town Council and managed by St. Martin's Field Charity. It is also made available for a range of community events and activities, including fun-fairs, fun runs and similar. Like events at The Greens, Littlestone, some of these events and activities benefit local organisations or charities by providing them with opportunities for fund-raising, whilst others provide entertainment for local residents.

During 2020-21, the following events took place at St. Martin's Field:

- No public events – in accordance with coronavirus pandemic legislation and guidance

ASSEMBLY ROOMS, NEW ROMNEY

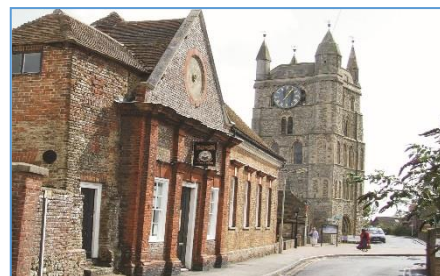
The Assembly Rooms in Church Approach, New Romney, are let on a regular basis to a range of local groups and organisations as well as for use by private persons.

The Assembly Rooms are currently closed due to the coronavirus pandemic, but preparations are in hand for re-opening safely, in accordance with coronavirus legislation and guidance.

For booking enquiries or further information, please go to the Town Council website: www.newromney-tc.gov.uk

or contact the Facilities and PR Clerk at the Town Hall.

Email: facilities-pr.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk Tel: 01797 362348



CHURCH LANE ALLOTMENTS



The Town Council is responsible for Church Lane Allotment Gardens and is pleased to report that whilst there currently remains only a short waiting list for plots, the take-up by new tenants as plots become vacant continues to be steady.

New plot identification numbers have recently been installed for ease of identification when potential incoming tenants wish to view the plot on offer to ascertain suitability for needs in respect of size or other matters. These will also assist Council Officers in carrying out their duties..

If you are interested in renting an allotment garden plot or for further information, please go to the Town Council Website: www.newromney-tc.gov.uk or contact the Facilities & PR Clerk at the Town Hall.

Email: facilities-pr.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk Tel: 01797 362348

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

New Romney Town Council appoints Members as representatives to other organisations. The Town Council would like to thank those Members who have, during 2020-21, served as Representatives on Outside Bodies, as follows:

Organisation	Town Council Representative 2020-21
Steward for Damian Collins MP	Cllr Mrs B Lonbay Kapoor
Town / Coast Ward Councillor Surgery Attendants	Cllr Mrs B Lonbay Kapoor, Cllr Rev Cn S McLachlan, Cllr D W Wimble, Cllr M Hardy (Reserve)
Emergency Contacts for Shepway District Council	The Mayor – Cllr P Thomas Deputy Mayor – Cllr Mrs P Metcalfe
Floodline Contacts for Environment Agency	Cllr P Thomas, Cllr J Rivers, Cllr J Picco, Cllr Miss J Hiscock
Kent Association of Local Councils	Cllr P Thomas, Cllr P Coe
Lydd Airport Consultative Committee	Cllr P Coe, Cllr J Picco, Cllr Ms W Nevard
Dungeness Site Stakeholder Group	Cllr A Rodriguez, Cllr P Coe
NHS / South Kent Coast Clinical Commissioning Group	Cllr Mrs P Rolfe, Cllr J Rivers
Southlands Almshouse Trust	Cllr P J Coe, Cllr Rodriguez, Cllr J Picco
Confederation of Cinque Ports	The Mayor – Cllr P Thomas, Deputy Mayor – Cllr Mrs P Metcalfe, Town Clerk – Mrs C Newcombe
Romney Marshes Area Internal Drainage Board	Cllr P Coe
Environment Agency	Cllr P Coe, Cllr Ms W Nevard
New Romney Allotment Association	Cllr Rev Cn S McLachlan
Romney Marsh Forum	Cllr Mrs P Metcalfe, Cllr Miss J Hiscock
Mayoral Representative	No permanent representative – appointed as and when required at the discretion of the Mayor



COUNCILLOR SURGERIES:

Regular Monthly Surgeries are held for the Town and Coast Wards of New Romney, at which residents can meet Members of the Town Council and, by appointment, the MP for the Romney Marsh, to discuss any issues that they may wish to raise.

Councillor & MP Surgeries were NOT held during 2020-21 due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

However, it is envisaged that Councillor Surgeries will resume, along with the MP surgery, from June 2021.

Town Ward and Coast Ward:

The Assembly Rooms, Church Approach, New Romney

MP and Town Councillor Surgery – First Friday in every Calendar Month (except August)

COUNCILLOR DETAILS

New Romney Town Council consists of a full membership of sixteen Councillors, with eight Members representing each of its two Wards.

In 2020-21, the Membership of New Romney Town Council was as follows:

Town Ward:

Councillor Mrs P S Rolfe
Councillor W D Wimble
Councillor A Rodriguez
Councillor Mrs B Lonbay Kapoor
Councillor J Phipps – resigned 08/10/20
Councillor Rev Cn S McLachlan
Councillor J Cramp – resigned 10/02/21
Councillor J Rivers
Councillor J Davies – since 09/04/21
Councillor P Carey – since 09/04/21

Coast Ward:

The Right Worshipful the Mayor of new Romney, Councillor P Thomas
Councillor Miss J M Hiscock
Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs P Metcalfe
Councillor Ms W Nevard
Councillor J Picco
Councillor M Hardy
Councillor R Tillson
Councillor P J Coe

For information about the work of a local council and the role of a councillor and for details about how to apply to become a Town Councillor, please visit the Town Council website:

www.newromney-tc.gov.uk

Alternatively, please contact the Town Clerk:

town.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk

Tel: 01797 362348

COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

19 JUNE 2020 UP TO AND INCLUDING 21 APRIL 2021

NB - It should be noted that due to the Covid pandemic not all agreed meetings have been held and those listed hereto have been remote meetings.

It should also be noted that some Councillor absences were the result of technical issues preventing access to remote meetings.

FULL COUNCIL

POSSIBLE

ACTUAL

Coast Ward

Councillor P D Thomas
Councillor J D Picco
Councillor P J Coe
Councillor J M Hiscock
Councillor Mrs P Metcalfe
Councillor R Tillson
Councillor M Hardy
Councillor Ms W Nevard

12
12
12
12
12
12
12
12

10
12
9
11
12
10
8
6

Town Ward

Councillor P S Rolfe	12	4
Councillor A Rodriguez	12	12
Councillor J Rivers	12	10
Councillor Rev Cn McLachlan	12	10
Councillor Mrs B Lonbay-Kapoor	12	9
Councillor W D Wimble	12	4
Councillor J Ebrey-Cramp	8	0
Councillor J Phipps	4	4
Councillor J Davies	1	1
Councillor P Carey	1	1

STANDING COMMITTEES

<u>Finance & General Purposes Committee</u>	<u>Possible</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Councillor R Tillson	6	2
Councillor Mrs P Metcalfe	6	6
Councillor J Ebrey-Cramp	5	0
Councillor Miss J Hiscock	6	5
Councillor Ms W Nevard	6	4
Councillor J Picco	6	6
Councillor J Phipps	1	1
Councillor J Rivers	6	5
Councillor A Rodriguez	6	5
Councillor P Thomas	6	6
Councillor P Coe	6	6
Councillor Rev Cn McLachlan	6	3

<u>Planning Committee</u>	<u>Possible</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Councillor P Thomas	10	10
Councillor J Picco	10	10
Councillor P Coe	10	10
Councillor R Tillson	10	4
Councillor Mrs P Metcalfe	10	10
Councillor J Rivers	10	8
Councillor D Wimble	10	4
Councillor Ms W Nevard	10	9
Councillor J Ebrey-Cramp	7	0

<u>Personnel Panel</u>	<u>Possible</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Councillor Mrs P Metcalfe	9	9
Councillor P Thomas	9	9
Councillor Miss J Hiscock	9	9
Councillor J Phipps	3	1
Councillor R Tillson	9	6

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2020/21 Budget Analysis

The Town Council's income and expenditure for the year 2020/21 is on target to balance. The cost of New Romney Town Council's services for a Band D property for the financial year was £131.08 equating to £10.92 per month or £2.52 per week.

The Town Council's Precept for the year 2021/22 in the amount of £361,000.00 represents an annual cost of £131.08 for New Romney Town Council's services for a Band D property for the year – which is a ZERO PERCENT increase on the previous year.

Analysis of Proposed Income and Expenditure for 2021/22

<u>Income</u>	<u>£</u>
New Romney Town and Coast Tax Payers	361,000.00
Hire of Land and Properties	16,307.00
Allotment Rents	2,000.00
Hut & Winch Site Rents	5,000.00
Other Income	<u>7,810.00</u>
Total Income	<u>360,740.00</u>

Expenditure

Finance & General Purposes Committee	
Sports Field and Maude Pavilion	2,350.00
Fairfield Road Recreation Ground	4,252.00
The Greens	4,210.00
Flagstaff Land	946.00
Allotment Gardens	2,430.00
Land at Coney Banks	50.00
Town Square	80.00
Garden of Remembrance	350.00
Assembly Rooms	8,930.00
Community Hall	3,255.00
Town Hall	14,875.00
Town Hall House	3,350.00
Insurances	9,000.00
Legal & Professional Fees	20,000.00
Donations	9,000.00
Subscriptions	3,600.00
Office Equipment	3,000.00
Computer Maintenance	4,000.00
Phone/Internet	2,000.00
Printing & Stationery	1,000.00
Public Clock	300.00
Postage and Petty Cash	1,500.00
Admin & Miscellaneous (inc. Mayor's/Civic Allowance)	18,250.00
Bank Charges	1,000.00
Payroll Outsourcing	750.00
Reserve Fund Contributions	67,839.00
Councillor Training	2,000.00
Contingency	10,000.00
PWLB Loan Repayment inc Interest	44,500.00
Other	200.00
Personnel Panel	147,850.00
Planning Committee	<u>250.00</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>392,117.00</u>

The Town Council is fully accountable to residents each year at the Annual Town Meeting at which time any questions may be raised.

The fully audited accounts for 2019/20 are available at the Town Hall for perusal by prior arrangement.

The Town Council has an approved Capital Spending Plan and an approved Investment Policy which are reviewed annually, details of which are available from the Town Hall by prior request.



Another Busy Year for New Romney Town Council

If you still wonder what your Town Council does, here are, once again, just a few examples of what New Romney Town Council did for the benefit of local residents during the past year:

JANUARY 2020:

- * Supported inaugural steering group meeting of the Romney Marsh Dementia Friendly Community, as part of becoming a Dementia Friendly Council.

FEBRUARY 2020:

- * Practical support provided to New Romney in Bloom
- * Agreed hand-over of Station Road Play area from FHDC to NRTC.

MARCH 2020:

- * Emergency remote Town Council Working Practices approved and implementation commenced to ensure continuation of Council Services for local residents in light of Coronavirus Pandemic.

- * NRTC Community Hall and Sports Pavilion planning application formally approved by the District Council subject to associated s106 Agreement – to be finalised and agreed.

- * Funding approved for VE Day 75 Commemorations

- * Funding approved for the establishment of the Romney Marsh Community Support Hub, to support the most vulnerable members of our community

APRIL 2020:

- * Coronavirus Financial Support for local groups tenanted Town Council premises approved.

- * Oversight of service development and roll-out at Romney Marsh Community Support Hub

MAY 2020:

- * Coronavirus cleansing regime developed and

- implemented for all Town Council outdoor play and exercise areas.

- * Social distancing and hand hygiene banners and signage designed, fabricated and installed at all Town Council outdoor play and exercise areas.

- * Supported remote VE Day Commemoration

JUNE 2020:

- * First formal remote Town Council meeting held, resuming routine Council business for the benefit of the local community.

JULY 2020:

- * Supported remote JAM on the Marsh Festival.

- * Supported remote New Romney Country Fayre.

- * Grant funding secured for High Street Commemorative Bench to be sited near Methodist church

- * Actively supported safe re-opening of High Street following initial coronavirus national lockdown

AUGUST 2020:

- * Supported remote VJ Day commemoration

- * Awarded start up support for New Romney in Bloom

SEPTEMBER 2020:

- * NRTC lobbied Kent Police in respect of unauthorised events occurring in the local coastal area and requested a follow-up meeting in 2021.

OCTOBER 2020:

- * Independent internal and external annual audit process completed, confirming clean bill of health in respect of financial and procedural matters once again!

- * Improvements to drainage ditches at Station Road Sports Field approved.

- * Protective measures for St. Martin's Field approved.

NOVEMBER 2020:

- * Supported remote Annual Royal British Legion Remembrance Service and Burma Star Service.

DECEMBER 2020:

- * Installation of Town Christmas Tree.

- * Illumination of New Romney Festive Lighting.

- * Supported remote Light Up New Romney event.

- * Supported, in principle, a water-sports centre project proposed to be established at The Greens, Littlestone, which would benefit local residents and support local tourism.

JANUARY 2021:

- * Fabrication of bollards for protection of St. Martin's Field commenced.

- * Culmination of close liaison with local Primary Care Network (PCN) and Community Support Hub to expedite Coronavirus Vaccination Site and local rollout of Coronavirus Vaccine for Romney Marsh.

- * Carried out improvement works at New Romney Allotments.

Spotlight on Healthcare on Romney Marsh

New Romney Town Council has continued to work with local PPG (Patient Participation Group) and PCN (Primary Care Network), to ensure healthcare provision is maintained and aligned with demand, despite the constraints, primarily related to the impact of the Pandemic.

Our District Councillors have continued to progress the New Primary Care Health Hub Project for New Romney, which is a much needed facility.

We also continue to support the Romney Marsh Day Centre in obtaining the necessary funding to secure its future.

New Community Hall and Sports Pavilion in Focus

The Town Council has continued to build upon the good foundations laid over the past three or four years to progress the detailed design and development of a new Community Hall and Sports Pavilion on the Station Road Sports Field.

Led by the Council's Project Steering Group the project reached a major milestone as a formal planning application was submitted to the District

Council and, in March 2020, planning consent was approved subject to finalisation of a section 106 agreement.

Discussions regarding the section 106 agreement are currently in hand. This has been a major achievement, particularly in light of all of the additional difficulties as a result of the global pandemic and moves to remote working systems.

Several grant funding applications are now also being progressed with a view to moving the project forward again as soon as planning matters have been concluded.

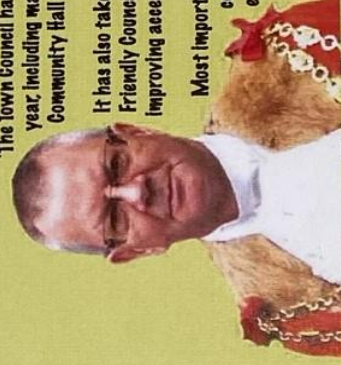
– and, as always, all this whilst maintaining and improving a large portfolio of public buildings and open spaces, providing grant funding for deserving local organisations and projects, responding to consultations and enquiries and engaging in a wide range of routine local government business etc.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor of New Romney, Councillor Paul Thomas, observes:

"The Town Council has continued to progress a range of significant matters over the past year, including making further substantial progress in respect of the proposed new Community Hall and Sports Pavilion.

It has also taken on the initiatives of working towards becoming a Dementia Friendly Council and becoming net carbon neutral as well as working on improving accessibility to its public buildings.

Most importantly, we have been extremely pro-active in supporting the local community through the coronavirus pandemic so that we can all help each other and come out of this terrible health emergency stronger and better – all of which will assist in making our local community a better place to live, work and visit."



**New Romney Town Council
Working Proactively, For And With The Community**

NEW ROMNEY ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 28TH APRIL 2021

Resident Questions

Item 1:

Firstly, I would like to thank the Town Council, in particular those councillors that helped out in person, for the efforts put in to help the NHS in its vaccination programme. I have observed on social media the gratitude expressed by many residents which is justly deserved.

1. St Martin's Field

I am pleased that bollards have been installed around the field at last so that unwanted encampments and other undesirable activities are prevented access. Personally, I would have preferred something "greener" but I am grateful, as are many residents, that this protection has been put in place. When the first encampment took place some years ago the Town Council agreed that some form of protection was necessary and it should be dealt with as a matter of urgency. Since then, there have been more encampments and other undesirable activities on The Field, some putting the Country Fayre at risk.

a) Please advise residents why it has taken so long to arrange the installation of this protection and why was the matter not dealt with as a priority?

The matter was, indeed, considered important and initial research/enquiries into the range of options for protection of the field were necessary prior to then seeking quotations for manufacture and supply of bollards, having first considered other options such as concrete blocks, fencing, for instance.

Having agreed, in principle, on a mode of protection, the seeking of quotations takes time as the Council is beholden to the timescales of the various suppliers in receiving requested quotes.

Searches/enquiries also needed to be undertaken to check that any installation would not cause any issues with underground services etc.

Once a quotation had been accepted, the bollards then had to be manufactured which adds further time to the implementation of what is a large project.

b) The cost of clearing up after the first encampment was substantial, around £10K I believe, and subsequent encampments added more to the cost. Please advise residents i) the cost for dealing with each of these encampments etc and the total cost

Encampment 1:	Clearance costs	£980.00
	Legal Fees	£4,120.35
	Total Costs	<u>£5,100.35</u>

Encampment 2:	Clearance costs	£350.00
	Total costs	<u>£350.00</u>

Encampment 3:	Clearance costs	£480.00
	Legal Fees	£1,468.00
	Total costs	<u>£1,948.00</u>

ii) the cost of the bollards ie manufacture and installation

£38,244.00 Budgeted

£27,768.00 Quotation accepted

This was fully minuted and is published on the Town Council website. (Minute ref: 171/2020-2021 refers)

£29,609.60 Final Order Value (inc additional works ie removal, refurbishment and re-siting of 3x cast bollards and minor manufacturing adjustments)

iii) details of other quotes including installation and the reason for choosing the WeWeld quote

Quote 1:	Broxap Ltd	(option 1)	£40,104.00
		(option 2)	£43,632.00
		(option 3)	£40,104.00
		(option 4)	£45,016.00
Quote 2:	Street Furnishings Ltd	(option 1)	£34,669.92
		(option 2)	£37,771.52
		(option 3)	£35,049.92
Quote 3:	ID Corcoran Ltd	(option 1)	£31,023.93
		(option 2)	£22,410.23
Quote 4:	Walker Construction Ltd	(option 1)	£45,533.91
		(option 2)	£49,545.11
		(option 3)	£45,129.11
		(option 4)	£50,152.31
Quote 5:	B E Ames Ltd		£30,580.80
Quote 6:	Bespoakdesigns Ltd		£31,512.00

Weweld was selected as the general consensus of opinion was that it was the most cost-effective option whilst balancing suitability for purpose with aesthetics, it had the shortest lead time in respect of manufacture and supply and in accepting this quote the Council was supporting local industry, which was particularly important in light of the financial impact of the coronavirus pandemic on local businesses.

c) Part of St Martin's Field and the Town Square have been sectioned off for several months, preventing access by residents, so that work can be completed on the new wine bar and flats/offices - it is commendable that the Town Council decided to support a local business in this way

i) Will the Town Council receive any financial gain or otherwise from allowing this to happen and if so in what way will this be used to benefit the residents of New Romney?

There has been no financial gain in providing access to the development via St. Martin's Field; however, in consenting to the access route, the Town Council aimed to minimise traffic disruption along the High Street to local residents and traders alike and has been supportive of local business, which is also very important to the local community.

ii) When is it envisaged that this work will be completed and the land made available once more to the residents of and visitors to New Romney?

It is envisaged that the field will be made good by end of May 2021.

2. Communications Policy

I had the pleasure of being part of the working group that formulated the Town Council's Communication Policy which was "..... approved and adopted with immediate effect" by the Town Council on 25 March 2019. Since then, I have been told a number of times that the document has been published but I have been unable to locate it on the Council's website.

Please advise residents where they can locate this document and if it is not on the website when will it be put there and if not why not?

The Communications Policy has now been published on the Town Council website but was always freely available on request.

3. Community Hall & Sports Pavilion

a) A new Cost Plan 8 has been provided - when will this be made available to the residents of New Romney?

This latest Cost Plan is very recent and is currently being analysed. As soon as analysis of same has been undertaken, it will be published on the Town Council website alongside all previous cost plans.

b) What is the current forecasted total cost of this project and when is it envisaged that the facilities will be available for use by the residents of New Romney?

See 3(a) above.

The Town Council has instructed its appointed Project Management Team to progress to preparation for tendering.

It is currently envisaged that the facilities will be available for use by local residents in 2023, subject to no legal or other matters arising which might otherwise delay progress.

c) Land to the rear of the sports field is/has been sold for development in order to provide funds towards the cost of the CH&SP.

i) How much was the land sold for?

ii) Was the land put up for sale? If so when and how was it advertised? If not, why not?

The sale of land is currently very close to completion. As such, this matter is subject to legal privilege; it is not in the public interest to discuss same outside of confidential session as this would risk prejudicing legal negotiations. However, all

due diligence was undertaken, all correct procedure followed and a full audit trail has been maintained.

Answers to the above questions are likely to be available, therefore, once all legal matters have been concluded and the land transfer completed.

d) i) What is the total of funds raised towards the cost of this facility?

To date: £848,635.00

ii) Who are the benefactors and the amount each has given?

NRTC: £819,500.00

Local Residents' Donations: £2,135.00

New Romney Coastal Community Team Donation: £2,000.00

Outside Grant Funding Awarded: £25,000.00 (with ability to apply for further £25,000.00 made available to the Town Council, if required)

iii) What is being done to raise more funds?

Land sale completion will result in substantial capital funding for this project (see 3(c)(ii) above)

VAT to be re-claimed in approximate amount of £600,000.00

Application to Collyer Fergusson Trust in hand

Application to Sport England to be submitted once it re-opens its Capital Fund

Local Donations to be invited again via statement on Town Council website

Magnox Funding to be sought in respect of Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment

KCC Members Grant to be sought for Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment

Awards for All funding to be sought for Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment

Application for a Public Works Loan for up to a maximum £1 million was approved by the Council, following public consultation, and taken into account within annual budgeting so that there will now be no negative financial impact on local council tax going forward. The Town Council will, of course, only draw down on the amount that is required to ensure the project is realised.

Many thanks



Resident in Rolfe Lane

Item 2:

Now that Covid restrictions are being lifted, can we please again have Council Agendas posted on the Town Council noticeboards and consider the posting of Full Council minutes as happened in years gone by?

Councillor Ms W Nevard

Whilst covid restrictions are gradually being eased, it is not anticipated that all restrictions will be lifted until at least 21st June 2021. The sole reason that agendas have not been published in Town Council noticeboards during the course of the coronavirus pandemic is due to the health risk posed in handling the noticeboards which very probably represent, a high frequency touchpoint and, therefore, pose a risk of transfer of virus.

The Town Council has an obligation to minimise any risk to its Members and Officers and, in the case of Officers, that is a legal duty of care under employment law. Nevertheless, as vaccine take-up is increasing and risk is slowly reducing, Councillors who volunteer to post notices in the notice-boards will be asked if they are willing to resume this activity from the new civic year, which commences in May 2021, subject to a relevant covid risk assessment first being drafted and subject to Councillors taking appropriate health and safety measures ie sanitising hands immediately after posting notices in the noticeboards.

Regarding the posting of Council minutes in Town Council noticeboards, this has not been the case for at least 19 years and there is no evidence of it having previously been the case. Furthermore, there is not adequate physical space to do so. However, minutes are freely available at the Town Hall for perusal by appointment when the Town Hall is open and are published on the Town Council website where they are freely available to all.

Item 3:

Now that lockdown restrictions are being lifted, can we have a firm promise that the Town Council will revert to open public meetings in the Assembly Rooms? This in order that the minimum possible members of the Council and Public are excluded from attendance?

Councillor Rev Cn S McLachlan

Whilst covid restrictions are gradually being eased, it is not anticipated that all restrictions will be lifted until at least 21st June 2021. Council meetings have been held remotely during the course of the coronavirus pandemic due to the risk posed in respect of transfer of virus if holding physical meetings in an enclosed, indoor space and through frequent touching of surfaces therein.

The Town Council has an obligation to minimise any risk to the Public, its Members and Officers and, in the case of Officers, that is a legal duty of care under employment law. The global pandemic still presents a risk to the UK of further 'waves' of illness despite the increasing vaccine up-take and, at this stage, therefore, there is no certainty in respect of how the situation might progress.

With this in mind, New Romney Town Council has, in fact, resolved that if legislation permits such beyond 6th May 2021, it will continue to hold meetings remotely. Minute ref: 491/2020-21(ii) refers. The Council also resolved to extend emergency delegated authorities and to further review the situation in September 2021.

In respect of access to meetings, all New Romney Town Council meetings held remotely have been open, public meetings – with invitations to attend and electronic links to every

meeting published on the Town Council website and social media page. Every Town Councillor has been able to access meetings and members of public have been regularly in attendance.

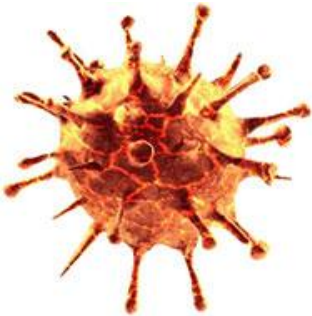
Whilst it can be argued that some people cannot attend remote meetings because they do not have internet access, it can also be argued that some people cannot attend physical meetings because they cannot get to them. Thus, overall, the move to remote meetings during the pandemic is unlikely to have had any major overall impact on accessibility to meetings in respect to public attendance.



Tony Hills KCC member for the Romney Marsh Division Annual Report 2021

Pandemic

This year has been unlike any other. So much suffering, so much pain and so much isolation. At Kent we have 'soldiered' on. My staff at County has been fantastic working 'virtually' on screen from home. So many virtual meetings, five days a week stretching into a seven day a week job, I have loved serving my community...and that is the one good thing to come out of this terrible pandemic is a strengthened sense of community on the Romney Marsh.



Covid 19

I'm proud how KCC has 'stepped up to the plate'... We've been there with residents and communities through Covid: supporting the vulnerable through 'Kent Together', securing millions of items of PPE, rolling out testing and supporting families, businesses and voluntary organisations.

It has been my pleasure to help the Romney Marsh Day Centre as it morphed into The Romney Marsh Emergency Hub, unlocking the volunteer strength of our community.

My Kent responsibilities

Positions I have served in over the last year.

Deputy Cabinet member for Environment & Waste. Chair of the Kent Flood Risk Management Committee. Member of the Health Overview and Scrutiny committee. Member for Kent of the Southern Region Flood & Coastal Committee. Member for Kent of the Kent & Essex Inshore Fishing Conservation Committee Member of the Kent Environment Transport & Waste Cabinet Committee Member of the Kent Environment Strategy (cross party group)

It has been a challenging year at Kent County Council, working 'virtually' from home. Many issues have come to the fore; it has been a test of stamina.

Highways

Kent County Council have just committed another £10 million to this year's pothole blitz, after a year in which Kent Highways filled in almost 50,000 potholes and patched the equivalent of 50 full size football pitches. This is alongside our £11 million road resurfacing programme and five year maintenance plan.

We are bringing forward our Vision Zero strategy for road safety, which not only has an ambitious aim for reducing or eliminating road accident deaths by 2050 but represents a new way for us to engage with communities and address safety concerns.

The Romney Marsh has highways like the rest of the County in poor condition. Reporting problems on line really helps, the more reports the better. We have more progress on 'Hammonds Corner' (A259); we now have a design for the roundabout. All we have to do is find the funding for the construction!

Climate Change

In my role of chair of the Kent Flood Risk Management Committee, as I said last year I'm 'privy' to many briefings, concerning the changing climate, more intense rainfall, warmer wetter winters, rising sea levels. I have attended many meetings to improve our sea defences over the southern side of Romney Marsh (Denge Marsh), which is so very much at risk. At last the plans to defend the Lydd Ranges have been approved and work should start this spring. This is all part of the FoCES plan (Folkestone to Cliff End Scheme) to defend the whole of the Romney Marsh. I get many enquiries concerning 'flood maps' showing the Romney Marsh at risk. You have to remember these flood maps show the risk without sea defences; we can and will continue to defend the Marsh.

Bus Transport...the opportunity

The Romney Marsh Partnership was set up to encourage new jobs as we face closure of Station 'A' at Dungeness. As a member of the RMP we have set up a bus working group. I have for some time been promoting the concept of an electric bus shuttle service from New Romney to Appledore station to access Ashford and Rye...The Green Line Service would link the two lines The Hythe & Dymchurch and the Southern Region main line. As I write this the Government has announced three Billion pounds to support electric bus travel in the country, with the support of Kent County Council I believe this service is a real possibility.

Medical Matters

This last year I was appointed to Kent County Council Heath Overview Scrutiny Committee. I have been vocal in supporting the A&E service at William Harvey Hospital, we need to retain this. Having supported the inoculation service at Lydd Airport, I believe this has been a great community success. Currently we are 'battling' to keep a GP led service at Orchard House in Lydd. I should hear in a couple of days from the Kent Clinical Commissioning Group.

Kent County Councillors have two main functions.

To represent residents of Romney Marsh at 'County' and do their level best to help with local concerns.

To play their part in 'running' the 'County' for the benefit of all the residents of Kent.



Tony Hills
Kent County Councillor for Romney Marsh

Report for the Town's Annual Meeting

**From Cllr David Wimble,
Cabinet Member for the District Economy, Planning, Tourism & Heritage.**

Well to say this year has been one of challenges would be an understatement! When we had our last Annual Town Meeting none of us had any idea about the Pandemic that would change every aspect of our lives. Because of the cancelling of last year's Annual Meeting because of Covid Restrictions, this is my first as a District Councillor in the current administration.

When I stood for election, I did not know that I would get elected, let alone by such a big majority and I had no idea that I would get invited to join the Cabinet with a portfolio of The District Economy, Planning and Heritage and tourism! In fact I was due to go back to Alaska two weeks after the election to undertake my employment on board a five star Cruise ship! I can report though that I have thoroughly enjoyed my last two years and had some interesting debates, both in the Chamber and many more in private, where I have been trying to fly the Flag for the Town and The Marsh.

One of the conditions I set out when I agreed to join the Cabinet was that the Marsh would get a better financial representation, as in my opinion all the money was being spent in Folkestone. I was asked to come up with a project idea and if feasible to take it through the planning stage and development.

By now you will realise that thanks to some investment from both Magnox agreeing to match the funds, we will soon be opening the doors to a multi million pound business hub and extension to Mountfield Industrial Estate, potentially bringing hundreds of new jobs to the town.

I have also been fighting against the council on some issues, and I must also credit Russell Tillson for helping me to stop the building of houses on the car park at Greatstone. At the time people stated that this could not be overturned. But not only did we manage this, I was then asked to come up with ways to help make up for the loss in revenue (around a million pounds) that this would bring into the district. So, I have proposed more beach huts and possible kiosk shops for the car park along with resurfacing and making it fit for purpose, with its own toilet block and disabled facilities.

One of my favourite responsibilities is working alongside our local nuclear industries and working with stake holders such as EDF, Magnox, and the NDA over the future of Dungeness, both in terms of decommissioning and also pushing the possibilities of a Dungeness C Station to be built by Rolls Royce on the site of Dungeness A. Although this may be many years in the making, we need to be making plans for the future now. And with our 'Green ambitions' and the demand on electricity far stripping supply, something will have to be done sooner rather than later.

I would also like to pay tribute to all the councillors who have helped out with the setting up of the three Support Hubs within the district. Although being set up initially by Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee and the Chief Executive Dr Susan Priest, Cllrs and Volunteers from across the political spectrum have worked tirelessly over the past 12 months to work in such an unusual and high-pressured environment.

I hope that soon we will be able to reintroduce our Councillor Surgeries again and that some form of normality will be back with us before too long.

Kindest regards, Cllr David Wimble.

District Councillor's Report by Councillor Patricia Rolfe

NRTC – Annual Town Meeting – 28th April 2021

May this find you in good health and optimistic spirit as we slowly emerge from the latest lockdown with some comfort in news of the immensely successful national (and local) vaccination rollout. They say that a week is a long time in politics, but the past year has been a 'lifetime' and there has been a seismic shift in everyone's priorities (individually, nationally, and globally) as a result of the global pandemic,

Despite the many challenges, there have been some silver linings – most notably the tsunami of community support as organisations and volunteers stepped up to the challenge of helping the most vulnerable in our area through the work of the Community Support Hub which was sited at New Romney Day Centre and strategically implemented by Folkestone & Hythe District Council.

So this report provides a synopsis of some, but not all, of the work I have been involved in over the past 12 months in my role as New Romney Ward Member.

Health Matters

Healthcare issues continue to remain a key focus of my work in the area. Having initiated the campaign to improve local healthcare provision across Romney Marsh in 2015, we have seen some improvements to the local health infrastructure (most notably the introduction of the interim Primary Care Health hub in the New Romney Day Centre). A key aim – which was central to the campaign and endorsed by the New Romney Coastal Community Team's Socio-Economic Plan – is the creation of a new multi-agency Health Centre.

a) New Primary Care Health Hub in New Romney

I remain a member of the Project Board tasked with steering the development of this much needed new facility. Health care providers, local GP's, the CCG and FHDC are working with KCC officers to progress the project which will be sited on Station Road immediately adjacent to the Marsh Academy and opposite the site for the New Romney Community Hall and Sports Pavilion (which I am steering on behalf of NRTC). The two buildings will form part of a proposed 'Health & Wellbeing Hub' for Romney Marsh and this holistic approach to healthcare provision has been endorsed by several key stakeholders.

b) Romney Marsh Community Hub

In March 2020 the District Council was tasked with creating a network of Community Hubs to help support the most vulnerable residents within the District. The New Romney Day Centre were chosen as the most appropriate location for a support centre for the Romney Marsh and in March 2020 – a few days prior to the announcement of the first lockdown, I joined around 30 representatives from a range of statutory, charitable and private organisations to discuss the setting up of the new Marsh based centre alongside the centres that were emerging in Folkestone – at the 3 Hills Sports Centre and in Hythe – at the Age Concern centre. Jon Wilson accepted the role of leading the development of the new hub and over the intervening period has provided a positive example of strategic, efficient and caring

management. The RMCH very quickly became an exemplar and its army of volunteers a real force for good within our community.

FHDC has provided financial and officer support throughout and it is to be noted that representatives from a range of organisations – including Cllr P Thomas on behalf of New Romney Town Council have made a positive contribution. I have, and will, continue to liaise with Jon as he continues his good work and would like, for the record, to thank him and his Team for all that they have done for our community during one of the most challenging, and for many people, frightening periods of time.

c) Marsh based Vaccination Centre

I worked closely with representatives of Invicta CIC who were tasked with the establishment of a Marsh-based 'Covid-19' vaccination centre in January. Several locations were considered but Lydd Airport was chosen and has proved to be hugely successful. Congratulations to everyone involved in both establishing and managing this very important recovery centre.

d) Kent County Council – Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

There have been numerous meetings of the above committee which is responsible for overseeing health services across the newly formed Kent & Medway Clinical Commissioning Group's geographic footprint. Various health services executives have presented reports and information to the committee for its comment and assessment. Importantly there have been regular updates on the Covid-19 response across the region which have been well received by the Committee

Residents' issues

I have regularly dealt with issues raised by local residents which include but are not limited to planning related matters, environmental concerns, parking, litter, dog waste, and housing issues. The pro-active response by FHDC officers to the issues of concern raised by residents is to be commended.

Council Meetings, Briefings and Training

FHDC's work has continued apace – indeed the programme of initiatives has widened over the past year. I have attended meetings of Full Council, Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the newly formed 'Finance & Scrutiny sub-Committee, and when appropriate – the Planning & Licensing Committee.

We have seen the introduction of a new Corporate Plan, the progression of both Otterpool Garden Town, and Prince's Parade and many other positive initiatives. The Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee's approach has now been remodelled as a result of several training sessions led by the Centre for Public Scrutiny which were very informative. It is now able to help influence and shape policy and projects much earlier in the decision making process – which can only make for better decisions that should translate to improved outcomes for local residents.

There have been many informative training sessions and briefings which include regular Otterpool Park updates as this monumentally important regeneration scheme is taken forward. Folkestone's new Place Brand briefing allowed members to input into the themes being developed. I hope this exercise can be undertaken for other areas across the District .

Oportunitas Ltd

As Chairman of the Board, I am pleased to confirm that the District Council's Housing Regeneration company continues to be run efficiently, and its' portfolio of properties well-managed by agents.

Phase One of the new development at the 'old' Royal Victoria Hospital which will see high quality residential flats being made available for private sector rent is progressing well and it is hoped this phase will be completed in early Autumn. Once completed, Phase Two will commence with the two phases eventually delivering 37 new homes for local residents.

This is another strategic 'tool' in the District Council's approach to mitigating the results of ever decreasing Central Government funding streams. It also provides a benchmark for good practice in delivering well run, high quality private rental units and so forms one of the Council's regeneration initiatives for the District

Romney Marsh Partnership

As Chairman of the RMP, I am pleased to report that the work of this important strategic regeneration forum has intensified over the past year and we have expanded its membership with the involvement of the CEO of Visit Kent, and the Principals of South Kent Colleges at Folkestone & Ashford. The Partnership also involves representatives from 4 local authorities (Kent CC, Folkestone & Hythe DC, Ashford Borough Council and Rother District Council) and other key stakeholders such as EDF, NDA, Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and others.

Going forward our work will be focussed on developing projects and initiatives that focus on 5 key areas that support projects which:

- Maximise opportunities in the nuclear, tourism and high-value sectors
- Improve accessibility to enable better workforce and community mobility
- Encourage and support business development
- Realise the workforce potential through skills development and
- Enhance infrastructure

An interim RMP co-ordinator was appointed last year, and the post is currently being advertised seeking a Senior Specialist Officer willing to undertake the newly enhanced role with the support of FHDC, KCC and NDA/Magnox Ltd.

Three sub-groups have been established to develop projects linked to:

- A) Tourism
- B) Community Transport & Accessibility and
- C) Skills

Notably there has been progress with the development of the new Community Transport Scheme. Work is also being undertaken to promote the implementation of the roundabout at Hammonds Corner, as well as the new Spine Road that would act as a by-pass to Mountfield Road and lessen the pressure on the High Street.

Improvements at Mountfield Rd Industrial Estate

- a) Mountfield Road Business Hub

The RMP (and the local New Romney Coastal Community Team) have supported the development of this project for many years. The new building is now being constructed and is progressing well. It is intended that it will be 'open for business' in early 2022.

b) Expansion of Mountfield Road Industrial Estate

Some years ago, FHDC undertook a master planning exercise for the Mountfield Road Industrial Estate. This was endorsed by the RMP and NRCCT. The strategic approach taken in relation to the expansion of this key Enterprise area has been a key factor in successfully securing funding for both the aforementioned hub, and the creation of a new road to further expand the estate and open up opportunities for new businesses to be sited there

Coastal Enhancements

Senior FHDC officers are currently developing proposals to improve coastal facilities at Littlestone (Coast Drive Car Park) and St Mary's Bay. Plans are being developed to install 120 high quality beach huts on Coast Drive Car Park as well as improve the car park surfacing. I am working with officers to see whether we can expand the scheme, so widening the impact by creating a Coastal heritage Park at the Greens as well as the furthering the aspiration for a new Watersports Centre both of which were endorsed by NRCCT within its socio-economic plan

Ward Grant 2020-2021 allocation

Here is a list of the organisations and projects that I have funded over the past year

1. New Romney DayCentre – new Hot box for Wheels on Meals Service
2. New Romney Old School Trust – scanner for archiving project
3. Folkestone Safe Haven – expansion of Wellbeing & Therapeutic activities (mental health outreach work across District including Romney Marsh)
4. Romney Marsh Community Hub(via RMDC) – new Wheelchairs for work linked to Marsh vaccination centre at Lydd airport
5. Romney Resource Centre – Special Educational Needs & Disabilities project

The main focus of the projects supported have been health related and for the benefit of residents on Romney Marsh

In summary

The above report covers some of the work I have undertaken this past year, I would be happy to answer questions.

Keep safe and well everyone

I can be contacted on: Patricia.Rolfe@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Councillor Patricia Rolfe

District Councillor - New Romney Ward

Chair of the Romney Marsh Partnership

Chair of Oportunitas Ltd

District Council Representative - KCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Chair of New Romney Coastal Community Team

New Romney Town Councillor - Town Ward

Former Mayor of New Romney

April 2021

E&OE

END