

# Cinque Port Town of New Romney



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

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## 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 in the Assembly Rooms, Church Approach, New Romney on **WEDNESDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2022** 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 Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021.
3. To receive presentations from local organisations and community groups, as advised.
  - New Romney Skateboard Group
  - Folkestone & Hythe District Council: Community Led Housing
  - Romney Marsh Morris
  - 1<sup>st</sup> New Romney Brownies
  - 1<sup>st</sup> New Romney Scouts
4. To receive the Annual Report of the Town Council for 2021/2022 – including, if available, update in respect of the Community Hall and Sports Pavilion project - and respond to any questions as may be put thereon.
5. To receive and note written questions submitted by any registered Local Government Elector and written responses supplied.
6. To receive the report of the County Councillor for the Romney Marsh Electoral Division, if available.

7. To receive the reports of the Shepway District Councillors representing New Romney, if available.
8. To receive the report of Kent Police / New Romney Community Warden, if available.
9. 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.
10. Pride of New Romney Awards 2021 /2022 – to be presented by the Town Mayor
11. Cheques for funding from the Mayor's Charity Fund to be presented to local deserving causes by the Town Mayor

**DATED THIS 14<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF APRIL 2022**

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

**MINUTES**

of

The Annual Town Meeting  
of New Romney Town Council  
held remotely on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021  
commencing at 7.30pm

**PRESENT:**

**The Right Worshipful The Mayor**  
Councillor P D Thomas

**Town Ward**

**Councillors:**

Mrs P S Rolfe, A Rodriguez, D Wimble,  
Mrs B Lonbay Kapoor, Rev Cn S McLachlan, J Davies and P  
Carey

**Coast Ward**

**Councillors:**

P J Coe, Miss J M Hiscock, Mrs P Metcalfe,  
R Tillson, Ms W Nevard and J Picco

**In Attendance:**

**Town Clerk:**

Mrs C Newcombe

**Finance Clerk:**

Mrs C T Morris

**Members of Public**

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**WELCOME**

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were conveyed as detailed below:

Councillor J Rivers	-	who was attending another meeting
KCC Councillr A Hills	-	due to technical issues

Reasons for absence were duly received and noted.

2. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019 were considered and it was noted that an amendment to minute reference 9(ii) was required to read 'A vote was taken amongst local residents and the motion failed.'

It was:

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Coe  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Wimble

**RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019 be received and approved.**

3. **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 ahead of the meeting via the New Romney Town Council website.

The Mayor presented the Report, highlighting key items of interest. The Chairman of the Community Hall and Sports Pavilion Project Steering Group reported on progress of the proposed Community Hall and Sports Pavilion, highlighting recent steps towards preparing for the tendering stage.

There were no further questions arising.

4. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

The Town Mayor presented details of questions for the Meeting that had been submitted in writing, highlighting detailed responses supplied thereto. Questions related to:

- Community Hall and Sports Pavilion costs and funding
- St Martin's Field Protection costs
- Publication of the Town Council Communications Policy
- Publication of Agendas and Minutes
- Timescale for resuming face to face Council meetings

5. **REPORT OF KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

Having received apologies from Kent County Councillor A R Hills, the his report was received and noted by those present. In his absence, there were no questions arising.

6. **REPORT OF SHEPWAY DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

(i) **Councillor D Wimble**

Councillor Wimble presented his report, which included details of District Council responsibilities and local issues that he has been engaging with.

There were no questions arising.

(ii) **Councillor Mrs P S Rolfe**

Councillor Mrs Rolfe presented her report, which included details of work undertaken in respect of local health matters as well as Ward Grants awarded during the past 12 months and work undertaken with other outside agencies.

There were no questions arising.

7. **WRITTEN NOTICE OF RESOLUTIONS**

The Town Clerk confirmed that no written notices of resolutions had been received by her during the period stated.

8. **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 Award from the present Mayor. The winners were:

Miss Hannah Buckland – for outstanding service to the Community by a young person.

Mr Jon Wilson - for outstanding service to the Community by an individual.

The Young High Street Traders, New Romney - for service to the Community by a local organisation.

The Rotary Club of the Romney Marsh – for service to the Community by a local organisation.

The 'Mayoral Star' award winner, personally chosen by the Mayor, was presented to Mr David Knight.

9. **KALC (KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS) COMMUNITY AWARD 2020**

Due to the emergence of the Coronavirus Pandemic, it had not been possible to present the afore-mentioned Community Award in 2020. Therefore, the Town mayor was pleased to also present this deferred Award to Mr Paul Alford and Mr Eric Brown of the Litter Picking Romney Marsh group.

**THANKS**

The Mayor thanked everyone present for attending.

The meeting then concluded at 8.47pm.

**NB** Copies of all reports and documents referred to within these Minutes are appended to the relevant agenda and available for perusal on the Town Council website or on request to the Town Clerk at the Town Hall.

*Minutes Prepared by the Town Clerk*



[www.newromney-tc.gov.uk](http://www.newromney-tc.gov.uk)



[town.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:town.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk)



### INTRODUCTION FROM THE TOWN MAYOR 2021-22

Welcome to this Annual Town Meeting of New Romney Town Council for the year 2021/22.

The last two years 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.

In March 2019, the Council quickly resolved to use digital resources to allow the Council to function using remote working and to hold remote meetings on Zoom, one of the few Councils in the District to do so. We also took the next step of sending out all of the papers for our Full Council meetings and

Committee meetings in digital form and giving the same access to Residents via our website. Our website has also been overhauled in this period making it much more user friendly and making it easier to find meeting details, as well as other useful information. We also added a regular news section to the website and this is also copied to our Facebook page, to improve communications to our Residents.

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. Central to these efforts was the Romney Marsh Community Hub which was provided with £10,000 by New Romney Town Council in 2020 to help kick-start its community effort. Jon Wilson, his staff and volunteers have provided an invaluable service to the community to ensure the most vulnerable residents had their medication, food and other essentials to survive the pandemic. In February 2021, we supported the establishment of the vaccination centre at New Romney Old School by Tayo Bella from New Romney Pharmacy. Over 30,000 people have benefitted from this facility and the service continues today. New Romney Pharmacy staff and Romney Marsh Community Hub volunteers were pivotal in the success of this venture. When Church Lane Surgery opened their doors for vaccinations, Romney Marsh Community Hub volunteers answered the call again and with the use of the 1<sup>st</sup> New Romney Scout Group Headquarters, they were also able to support the delivery of many thousands of vaccinations by the Church Lane Surgery staff.

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 and Nursery Project which was impacted by the pandemic and Brexit, resulting in escalating costs. The Council decided to stop the existing project design and move forward with a budget focused design.

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 Folkestone and Hythe District Council (FHDC) and will upgrade the facilities to the same high standard we have on The Greens and in Fairfield Road.

We took over the dilapidated toilet block on The Greens from FHDC. We were working with a group to have the facility refurbished and provide a new toilet but that group has now decided to move to the new FHDC Beach Huts at the front of Cost Drive Car park, when they are built.

We were pleased to be able to support the new High St commercial premises that opened in 2021, one of very few High Streets that are expanding. The use of Cinque Ports Place (Town Square) to allow the expansion of these businesses was agreed by the Town Council and now provides a very welcoming look to the centre of the High St.

We have upgraded one of the shelters on The Greens recognising the increasing use of our seafront by visitors and have plans to continue the work on other shelters in 2022. We have also installed new play equipment in the Fairfield Road play area, which has been a huge success.

We are establishing a Parish Council Highway Improvement Plan to consider road safety issues including speed limits and parking. We have held three community engagement events in the Assembly Rooms and have had over 100 Residents attend, resulting in over 70 suggestions which will be taken to the Council Task & Finish Group.

We have dropped the ball on High St Christmas lights, utilising those that have been in use for many years. Our Planning Clerk is working with KCC Highways to establish the condition of the street lighting poles, so we can then understand what we can fit and where we can fit it. Following on from the success of the Children's Christmas Card Competition last year, we are also proposing to hold a "Design a Christmas Light Competition" in 2022 and the winning design will be displayed in the Town. I would like to thank our Council staff who continued to work remotely throughout the pandemic, our Councillors who adapted to the ZOOM platform to run Council business but are now back to face to face meetings.

Finally, I would like to thank the young people of our Town, the teachers and school support staff who have had to contend with unprecedented conditions over the last two years

The Right Worshipful the Mayor for 2021-22, Councillor Paul Thomas

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## **TOWN COUNCIL SUCCESS STORIES**

2021-2022 has been another busy and productive year for New Romney Town Council whilst the Town has been gradually coming out of the worst of the coronavirus pandemic, with further improvements to the locality being undertaken for the benefit of residents and the large-scale Community Hall and Sports Pavilion project continuing to progress slowly in the background. There have, as always, been a number of successes along the way that are definitely worthy of highlighting within this report:

- **CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL!**

Over the last three years, New Romney Town Council has established a number of working parties to investigate and propose action plans to Full Council for consideration and adoption. Many of the working parties have been on hold through the pandemic and are currently being re-established.

In the past year, in fact, New Romney Town Council has resumed working on 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.



## Litter

Following the Annual Town meeting in August 2019, the Council resolved to form a Litter Strategy Working Party.

'New Romney Litter Strategy' Working Party currently comprises of Councillors Thomas and Rivers and a representative from the local Litter Picking Group. They were tasked with researching and creating a 'New Romney Litter Strategy' for the benefit of local residents, businesses and visitors to the area; to be presented to Full Council for approval and adoption.

The working party have actively progressed the assessment and repair/replacement of FHDC and NRTC bins in the Town. Many of the defective sea front bins have been replaced, with many more ear-marked for replacement in the near future. Additional bin locations have also been identified and NRTC funding has been approved for new bins in 2022.

## Dementia

In September 2019, the Council resolved to **"become a Dementia Friendly Council"**.

The Council resolved that (i) all New Romney Town Council Members shall undertake Dementia-Friendly Training and that (ii) New Romney Town Council shall take steps to become a Dementia Friendly Council, establishing a Working Party, currently comprising of Councillors Mrs Metcalfe, Rev Cn McLachlan, Rivers and Thomas.

Many Councillors have now received that training with the remainder due to be trained shortly. Cllrs Rivers and Thomas sit on the Romney Marsh Dementia Forum.

KCC recently changed the process for becoming a Dementia Friendly Council and NRTC are currently reviewing its approach to meet the revised criteria.

## Climate Emergency

In September 2019, the Council resolved to declare **" a Climate Change and Ecological Emergency, with the aim of making its activities nett carbon neutral by 2030"**.

A working party was established currently comprising of Councillors Hiscock, Metcalfe, Tillson and Thomas.

The Council was the first in Kent to complete the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) Carbon Footprint Calculator and identify potential areas for improvement.

The Council has also prepared a new Environmental Policy which is to be reviewed at the Planning Committee and then presented to Full Council for consideration and adoption.

## Accessibility

In October 2019, the Council resolved to establish an **"Accessibility Working Party"** currently comprising of Councillors Rev Cn McLachlan, Rivers, Hiscock and Thomas. The working party were tasked with looking at the issues of accessibility to the Town Hall and Assembly Rooms and the need to

assess the recommendations of the relevant Access Audits recently commissioned by the Town Council and develop a resulting Action Plan.

The working party have made a number of recommendations to the Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP) to carry out remedial work at the Town Hall and Assembly rooms.

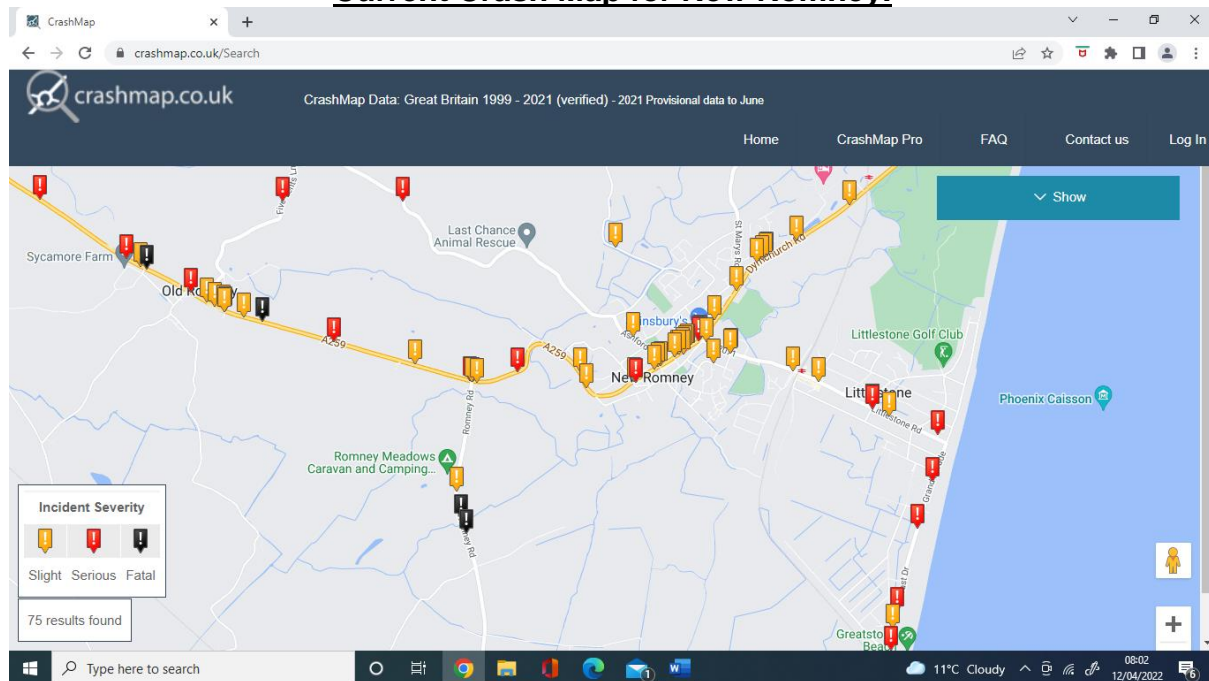
The Council also resolved to hold Town Council meeting in the Assembly Rooms until the chair-lift access to the Council Chamber had improved reliability.

## Parish Highway Improvement Plan



Kent County Council (KCC) has a [three step evaluation process](#) to evaluate all highway improvement proposals. The first step is to check the history of the site for crashes within the last three years which resulted in personal injury. (To count, these crashes must have been reported and validated by Kent Police, so the majority of minor collisions are not registered on the [crashmap](#) records). Therefore, KCC is unlikely to consider an improvement scheme for a site with no crash history, **unless there is support from community representatives**. KCC states that: 'To suggest safety changes to the highway, your first point of contact is your [local parish council](#) or local [district councillor](#) or your [county member](#). They will need the crash data you obtained in step 1 or your reasons for promoting the changes. It may also be that your county member or parish council are able to financially support your request. If they are not supportive, then it would be very difficult for us (KCC) to prioritise your request and you should not contact us **If they are supportive they will contact us and let us know the extent of community support for change.'**

### **Current Crash Map for New Romney.**



A Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) is a method whereby KCC will consult with Parish Councils to create a plan for highway improvements in a parish area. The idea is for the Parish Council to list their ideas for improvements in priority order with as much information as possible to allow KCC officers to then investigate the ideas initially as a desk top study and then be able to discuss the ideas a little more in depth. The benefit of this approach is that there is then an agreed document setting out the various schemes and the recommended action going forward. However, it is how these schemes are funded where the issues arise. KCC have no specific allocation of funding for a HIP with any funding for a

scheme having to enter a bidding process within KCC. Therefore, it is very likely that there will be no, or limited, funding available from KCC. KCC see it as an opportunity to work with Parish Councils with the potential for possibly jointly funding projects or looking to Parishes to fund a scheme possibly in conjunction with the local KCC Member and his grant fund.

New Romney Town Council have carried out three Community Engagement Events at the Assembly Rooms, attended by over 100 residents and have over 70 Highway Improvement suggestions. The next step is for the Council Task and Finish Group to assemble these ideas into a prioritised plan, to be presented to KCC. Our KCC Councillor Tony Hills is aware of the project and we also have close links with our local KCC Highways manager.

### **Support for Ukraine**

In addition to the on-going work of Town Council Working Parties as detailed above, at its most recent Full Council meeting, the Town Council has established a further Working Party to develop a strategy for supporting Ukrainian refugees coming into the area in practical terms. It is hoped that through the initial work of this Working Party, the Council will be able to work closely with individuals, community groups and outside agencies to develop and coordinate groups of volunteers within New Romney and its environs and establish a local support group which can come together to support those Ukrainian families who arrive in our area, working as a subset of the District Council support.

## • IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LOCALITY

### Fairfield Road Recreation Ground

After considerable delays as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic and logistical issues impacting suppliers, the Town Council was delighted to see the installation of the new multi-slide unit at Fairfield Road Recreation Ground. The new accessible unit, which replaced an old and unserviceable mound slide, provides multiple climb and slide opportunities for all ages and abilities and has proven to be a very popular addition to this play area.



### Renovation of Victorian Sea Shelter



New Romney Town Council has also completed 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.

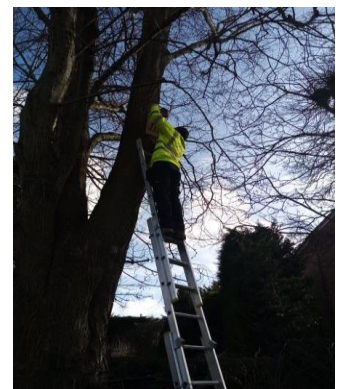
### Environmental Upgrades

During the past year, New Romney Town Council has worked hard to improve the local environment in line with its commitment to becoming a more environmentally-friendly Council.



The Parish Caretaker team worked hard on improving the central flower bed on St. Martin's Field, planting a wide range of Pollinator friendly flowers and shrubs. These are now becoming more established and, as well as the flower bed looking very attractive for our local residents, it has also already become very attractive to our local BEE residents. The Parish Caretaking Team have also been working on creating a small wildflower area to the rear of the Assembly Rooms – again to support bees and other pollinators.

You may have seen our Caretakers out and about during the course of the past year installing 10 bird boxes around the parish – to support our local nesting birds – and, more recently, they have installed 3 bat boxes within the parish and it is hoped that soon, we might see that we have some bats taking up residence.



The Town Council also provided its Caretaking Team to assist Kent Wildlife Trust with the clearance of the East Sewer drainage ditch adjacent to the Station Road Sports Field which had become filled with fly-tipped litter. It was a real bonus to see ducks return to the freshly cleared ditch ... A sight that has not been seen for many a year!

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## **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, including external refurbishment of the adjacent old community hall (currently used as a nursery school).



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. However, the Council then had to enter into protracted legal negotiations before the s106 Agreement, in its final form, was eventually completed on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and formal planning consent was issued on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

In the interim, the Town Council did put the project out to tender and engaged in a very detailed process, very much supported and assisted by its appointed Project Management Team. As a result, in October 2021, the Council received seven tender returns for the project, ranging in value from £3.9 million pounds to over £5 million pounds. This compares to a March 2021 cost estimate of just over £3 million pounds.

In November 2021, the Council selected three of these tenderers to present their detailed, costed project proposals to the Project Steering Group (PSG). Following this exercise, the Council selected a preferred tenderer to work with the Project Team to attempt to bring the building cost down to the available budget, using a value engineering approach.

At the Full Council meeting on 9th February 2022, the Project Team report was presented with an amended cost proposal but this still exceeded the currently available budget by nearly £200,000. The Council considered a range of options to address this shortfall, including use of reserves and borrowing additional money but these solutions were rejected in order to mitigate the potential for negative financial impact on local taxpayers. Consequently, due to the massive post-pandemic increase in building costs which was completely unprecedented and could not have been foreseen pre-pandemic, the Council decided to change its approach to the building of the Community Hall and Sports Pavilion and the enhancement of the adjacent Nursery building, and move forward with a project re-design that would deliver the new building within the available budget.

The Council accepted that this would introduce further delays to the project but acknowledged that it would ensure the new design is deliverable within the available budget.



In reporting this decision to local press, Council Chairman, Cllr Paul Thomas, said: "The Council remains committed to delivering a high quality, fit for purpose facility that will meet the needs of the community. The Council has a very healthy budget and has the benefit of the previous project work to act as a solid foundation for success. The Council will be providing each home with an explanatory leaflet on the current situation and the future plans". That explanatory leaflet has been printed and its delivery to Royal Mail for door to door distribution is currently in hand. It is hoped that local residents will receive the leaflet during the early part of May.

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## GRANT FUNDING SUPPORT

During 2021-22, New Romney Town Council has awarded grant funding as follows:

St. Martin's Field Charity	-	£4,000.00
New Romney in Bloom	-	£ 500.00
Light Up New Romney	-	£ 500.00
HIKent	-	£1,000.00
New Romney Country Fayre	-	£ 750.00
JAM on the Marsh	-	£1,500.00

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## COMMUNITY EVENTS



During 2021-2022, the coronavirus pandemic continued to impact on many aspects of community life but gradually live events resumed in the Town and New Romney Town Council was able to go ahead with the Speaker's Day parade and church service in October 2021 – albeit that the weather, in the end, scuppered the full-scale event, which had to be reduced down to a much shorter procession into church. Nevertheless, it still provided a much loved historic spectacle for those who braved the weather!



The Council also provided a free community Christmas Concert in the Parish Church and this was very well attended and very well received.

New Romney Town Council also supported a number of Community events – whether financially or in kind, including:

New Romney Lantern Parade

RBL New Romney Remembrance Day Service

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## **THE GREENS, LITTLESTONE**

The Greens, Littlestone, is an area of informal, open space which is owned and maintained by the Town Council. Whilst it is predominantly used for community recreational activity, it is also 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. On Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2022, New Romney Town Council will be hosting a Queen's Jubilee Beacon Lighting event on The Greens, Littlestone, including an evening of activities and light entertainment – leading up to the lighting of the beacon itself. Look out for the posters on social media, in Town Council noticeboards and on the Town Council website.

During 2021-22, the following events took place at The Greens:

- No public events

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## **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 and predominantly used for community recreational activity. 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 2021-22, the following events took place at St. Martin's Field:

- No public events

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## **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 have now re-opened as New Romney moves away from the worst of the coronavirus pandemic.

For booking enquiries or further information, please go to the Town Council website: [www.newromney-tc.gov.uk](http://www.newromney-tc.gov.uk)

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

Email: [facilities-pr.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk](mailto: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.

The routine plot inspection process resumed during the 2021 growing season and it is clear that Tenants have really taken pride in

their work and the Allotment Gardens are looking lovely!

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](http://www.newromney-tc.gov.uk) or contact the Facilities & PR Clerk at the Town Hall.

Email: [facilities-pr.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk](mailto: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 2021-22, served as Representatives on Outside Bodies, as follows:

Organisation	Town Council Representative 2021-22
Steward for Damian Collins MP	Cllr Mrs B Lonbay Kapoor
Town / Coast Ward Councillor Surgery Attendants	Cllr Mrs B Lonbay Kapoor, Cllr R Tillson, Cllr D W Wimble, Cllr M Hardy
Emergency Contacts for Shepway District Council	Town Mayor – Cllr P Thomas Deputy Mayor – Cllr Mrs P Metcalfe
Floodline Contacts for Environment Agency	Cllr P Thomas, Cllr J Rivers, Cllr Miss J Hiscock
Kent Association of Local Councils	Cllr P Thomas, Cllr P Coe
Lydd Airport Consultative Committee	Cllr P Coe, Cllr Rev Cn S McLachlan
Dungeness Site Stakeholder Group	Cllr A Rodriguez, Cllr P Coe
NHS / South Kent Coast Clinical Commissioning Group	Cllr J Rivers
Southlands Almshouse Trust	Cllr P J Coe, Cllr Rodriguez, Cllr Rev Cn McLachlan
Confederation of Cinque Ports	Town Mayor – Cllr P Thomas, Deputy Mayor – Cllr Mrs P Metcalfe, Town Clerk – Mrs C Newcombe
Romney Marshes Area Internal Drainage Board	Cllr P Coe, Cllr Ms W Nevard
Environment Agency	Cllr P Coe, Cllr Ms W Nevard
New Romney Allotment Association	Cllr Miss J Hiscock, Cllr R Tillson
New Romney Coastal Community Team	Town Mayor – Cllr P Thomas, Cllr R Tillson
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 Community Warden for New Romney 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 2021 due to the on-going impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. However, they did resume, along with the MP surgery - and a new addition, a Community Warden's Surgery, in January 2022.

### **Town Ward and Coast Ward:**

The Assembly Rooms, Church Approach, New Romney  
MP, Town Councillor and Community Warden Surgery – First Friday in every Calendar Month (except August)

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## **COUNCILLOR DETAILS**

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

In **2021-22**, the Membership of New Romney Town Council was as follows

### **Town Ward:**

Councillor Mrs P S Rolfe (resigned 15/12/21)  
Councillor W D Wimble  
Councillor A Rodriguez  
Councillor Mrs B Lonbay Kapoor  
Councillor Rev Cn S McLachlan  
Councillor J Rivers  
Councillor J Davies – since 09/04/21  
Councillor P Carey – since 09/04/21  
Councillor Mrs S Hodges – since 03/03/22

### **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 (Resigned 23/08/21)  
Councillor M Hardy  
Councillor R Tillson  
Councillor P J Coe  
Councillor Mrs J Paice – since 11/11/21

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](http://www.newromney-tc.gov.uk)

Alternatively, please contact the Town Clerk:

[town.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:town.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk) Tel: 01797 362348

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## **COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

### **19 JUNE 2020 UP TO AND INCLUDING 23 MARCH 2022**

**NB** - It should be noted that due to the Covid pandemic not all agreed meetings have been held and those held from 19 June 2020 to 05 May 2021 were remote meetings.

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

<b><u>FULL COUNCIL</u></b>	<b><u>POSSIBLE</u></b>	<b><u>ACTUAL</u></b>
<b><u>Coast Ward</u></b>		
Councillor P D Thomas	26	24
Councillor J D Picco(Resigned 23/08/21)	16	13
Councillor P J Coe	26	23
Councillor J M Hiscock	26	25
Councillor Mrs P Metcalfe	26	25
Councillor R Tillson	26	22
Councillor M Hardy	26	11
Councillor Ms W Nevard	26	15
Councillor Mrs J Paice	6	2
<b><u>Town Ward</u></b>		
Councillor P S Rolfe(Resigned 15/12/21)	22	10
Councillor A Rodriguez	26	25
Councillor J Rivers	26	22
Councillor Rev Cn McLachlan	26	19
Councillor Mrs B Lonbay-Kapoor	26	15
Councillor W D Wimble	26	11
Councillor J Ebrey-Cramp (Resigned 10/02/21)	8	0
Councillor J Phipps (Resigned 08/10/20)	4	4
Councillor J Davies	16	16
Councillor P Carey	16	8
Councillor Mrs S Hodges	1	1

## **STANDING COMMITTEES**

<b><u>Finance &amp; General Purposes Committee</u></b>	<b><u>Possible</u></b>	<b><u>Actual</u></b>
Councillor R Tillson	13	9
Councillor Mrs P Metcalfe	13	12
Councillor J Ebrey-Cramp (Resigned 10/02/21)	5	0
Councillor Miss J Hiscock	13	10
Councillor Ms W Nevard	13	8
Councillor J Picco (Resigned 23/08/21)	8	6

Councillor J Phipps (Resigned 08/10/20)	1	1
Councillor J Rivers	13	12
Councillor A Rodriguez	13	12
Councillor P Thomas	13	12
Councillor P Coe	13	13
Councillor Rev Cn McLachlan	13	5
Councillor P Carey	7	4
Councillor J Davies	7	5

<b><u>Planning Committee</u></b>	<b><u>Possible</u></b>	<b><u>Actual</u></b>
Councillor P Thomas	23	23
Councillor J Picco (Resigned 23/08/21)	15	10
Councillor P Coe	23	22
Councillor R Tillson	23	9
Councillor Mrs P Metcalfe	12	12
Councillor J Rivers	23	18
Councillor D Wimble	10	4
Councillor Ms W Nevard	23	21
Councillor J Ebrey-Cramp (Resigned 10/02/21)	7	0
Councillor P Carey	13	8
Councillor J Davies	13	10
Councillor Mrs J Paice	4	1

<b><u>Personnel Panel</u></b>	<b><u>Possible</u></b>	<b><u>Actual</u></b>
Councillor Mrs P Metcalfe	14	14
Councillor P Thomas	14	13
Councillor Miss J Hiscock	14	14
Councillor J Phipps (Resigned 08/10/20)	3	1
Councillor R Tillson	14	10
Councillor J Davies	5	5

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

### 2021/22 Budget Analysis

The Town Council's income and expenditure for the year 2021/22 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 2022/23 in the amount of £363,553.00 represents an annual cost of £131.01 for New Romney Town Council's services for a Band D property for the year – which is a 0.06% DECREASE on the previous year.

**Analysis of Proposed Income and Expenditure for 2022/23**

<u>Income</u>	£
New Romney Town and Coast Tax Payers	363,553.00
Hire of Land and Properties	16,672.00
Allotment Rents	2,000.00
Hut & Winch Site Rents	5,000.00
Other Income	<u>7,625.00</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b><u>394,850.00</u></b>

Expenditure

Finance & General Purposes Committee	
Sports Field and Maude Pavilion	2,360.00
Fairfield Road Recreation Ground	4,300.00
The Greens	5,440.00
Flagstaff Land	953.00
Allotment Gardens	2,522.00
Land at Coney Banks	50.00
Town Square	80.00
Garden of Remembrance	350.00
Assembly Rooms	8,470.00
Community Hall	2,250.00
Town Hall	14,555.00
Town Hall House	3,370.00
Insurances	9,000.00
Legal & Professional Fees	20,000.00
Donations	7,000.00
Subscriptions	4,000.00
Office Equipment	3,000.00
Computer Maintenance	4,000.00
Phone/Internet	2,000.00
Printing & Stationery	800.00
Public Clock	300.00
Postage and Petty Cash	1,500.00
Admin & Miscellaneous (inc. Mayor's/Civic Allowance)	15,500.00
Bank Charges	600.00
Payroll Outsourcing	750.00
Reserve Fund Contributions	61,000.00
Councillor Training	2,000.00
Contingency	10,000.00
PWLB Loan Repayment inc Interest	44,500.00
Other	100.00
Personnel Panel	163,850.00
Planning Committee	<u>250.00</u>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b><u>394,850.00</u></b>

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 2020/21 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.





# New Romney Town Council

## Keeping up the good work!



**New Romney Town Council has had another busy year supporting the community and working to improve the local environment for the benefit of local residents during the past year:**

### JANUARY 2021:

\*Granted formal permission for the Foiling Collective to set up a water sports business at The Greens, Littlestone to encourage local engagement in active pastimes and support local tourism and employment

### FEBRUARY 2021:

\*Actively supported local residents in raising and resolving highways and other issues with Pentland Homes

### MARCH 2021:

\*NRTC took over responsibility for the public toilet block at The Greens, Littlestone

\*Confirmed support of the FHDC Beach Huts initiative at Littlestone Car Park, supporting local tourism and employment

\*Refurbishment of Victorian Sea Shelter at The Greens approved

\*Worked with Kent Wildlife Trust to facilitate the renovation of the East Sewer at Station Road Sports Field to improve drainage, ecology and biodiversity

\*'Bee Bombs' purchased for distribution to primary school children in New Romney to support local ecology and biodiversity

### APRIL 2021:

\*Installed bollards around St Martin's Field to protect the area for the enjoyment of local residents and visitors to the Town

\*Actively supported and assisted Romney Marsh Litter Pickers and Kent Wildlife Trust in clearing litter and fly-tipped items from ditches around Station Road Sports Field

\*Actively supported and assisted Kent Wildlife Trust in planting pollinator friendly plants along the bank of the East Sewer to support local ecology and biodiversity

\*Refurbishment of St. Martin's Field Flower Garden undertaken, including pollinator-friendly planting to support local ecology and biodiversity

### MAY 2021:

\*Supported the Royal British Legion VE Day service

\*Town Mayor appointed as the 664th Speaker of the Cinque Ports

### JUNE 2021:

\*Face to face public Town Council meetings resumed

\*Upgrade of Town Hall IT systems approved to modernise service provision and communications

\*Actively supported Town Square proposals for outdoor seating to support local traders and encourage tourism

### JULY 2021:

\*Supported JAM on the Marsh Festival.

\*Approved participation in Queen's Platinum Jubilee Commemorations 2022

### AUGUST 2021:

\*Additional Town Bench purchased for installation in New Romney High Street

\*Adaptations to rear entrance of Assembly Rooms approved to improve accessibility

\*Successfully campaigned for the extension of the 30mph speed limit in Ashford Road, New Romney

\*Supported the Royal British Legion VJ Day service

### SEPTEMBER 2021:

\*New Romney Community Emergency Plan approved, adopted and published

### OCTOBER 2021:

\*Actively supported and assisted with annual wildflower management at The Greens, Littlestone to benefit local ecology and biodiversity

\*Approved development of a New Romney Highways Improvement Plan

\*Community Hall and Sports Pavilion Tendering Process completed

### NOVEMBER 2021:

\*Supported Annual Royal British Legion Remembrance Service and Burma Star Service

\*Highways Improvement Plan consultation and public drop-in sessions undertaken

\*Allotment Gardens clear-up completed

\*Town Square Outdoor Seating Area Formally Established

### DECEMBER 2021:

\*Installation and illumination of Town Christmas Tree – generously supplied by George Stevens.

\*Illumination of New Romney Festive Lighting.

\*Supported Light Up New Romney event.

\*Provided free community Christmas Concert

\*Installed 10 bird boxes – generously supplied by Kent Wildlife Trust - around the Parish to support local ecology and biodiversity

### JANUARY 2022:

\*Installation of new multi-slide unit at Fairfield Road Recreation Ground completed

\*Plans for Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022 Commemorations in hand



## Spotlight on Healthcare and Wellbeing on Romney Marsh

New Romney Town Council has continued to work with Romney Marsh Community Hub to promote the wide range of facilities, services, groups and activities provided to support general health and well-being in the local community. We also continue to actively support the Romney Marsh Covid Vaccination programme and to undertake routine covid cleansing of all outdoor NRTC play and exercise equipment.

## New Community Hall and Sports Pavilion in Focus

The Town Council has continued to progress the Community Hall, Sports Pavilion and nursery refurbishment project. Led by the Council's Project Steering Group, protracted negotiations went on during 2021 to finalise the required section 106 agreement. Along with the earlier lengthy planning process and the on-going global coronavirus pandemic, this further delayed progress on the project. However, a tendering pack was, nevertheless, approved and published and the project tendering process was undertaken in September/October 2021, the outcome of which is currently being reviewed.

... 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.

## New Romney Town Council leads, it listens and it works!

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 on-going work towards becoming a Dementia Friendly Council and becoming nett carbon neutral as well as improving accessibility to its public buildings.

It has also commenced the development of a Highways Improvement Plan and a New Romney Litter Strategy. Most importantly, we have continued to be pro-active in supporting the local community through the coronavirus pandemic so that we can all help each other and emerge from it 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 Local Community



## NEW ROMNEY TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY HALL, SPORTS PAVILION & NURSERY PROJECT



### New Romney Town Council Commits to Community Hall / Sports Pavilion Re-Design

#### Where we are at

- The Community Hall and Sports Pavilion Project, including nursery building refurbishment, was put out to tender towards the end of 2021
- It became clear that anticipated pre-covid project costs had risen by nearly a million pounds
- Efforts were made in early 2022 to work closely with a preferred contractor to reduce costs
- It was not possible to reduce costs to a level that was affordable without having a negative financial impact on local Council Tax payers
- It was decided that the Community Hall, Sports Pavilion and Nursery project could not be delivered in its current form

#### Why we are here

- No Deal Brexit
- Planning Delays
- Covid Pandemic
- All of the above have created delays and price rises that could not have been anticipated when the Town Council project started 5 years ago in 2017 and even 2 years ago pre-covid

#### What we are doing

- **It has been decided that the project will now be re-designed so that it can be delivered within a fixed budget**
- The project will have to be put out to tender again
- The project may require amended or further planning permissions
- The delivery of the project – which it was hoped would happen by the end of 2022 – will now be delayed to allow for this

#### BUT

- **New Romney Town Council remains committed to delivering a high quality, fit for purpose facility that meets the needs of the Local Community and which the Local Community deserves.**
- **New Romney Town Council has a very healthy budget and is committed to delivering the Community Hall, Sports Pavilion and Nursery Project within this available budget.**

If you have any comments on the above, please email [town.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:town.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk)





**Thursday 2nd June to Sunday 5th June 2022**

## **New Romney celebrates the Queen's Platinum Jubilee**



**THURSDAY 2ND JUNE**  
Free open-air evening of light entertainment on The Greens, Littlestone, from 6.30pm, leading up to the lighting of the Jubilee Beacon at 9.45pm



**SATURDAY 4TH JUNE**  
Town Mayors Jubilee Afternoon Tea with guests drawn from community nominations (Look out for the nomination form)



**SUNDAY 5TH JUNE**  
Combined Jubilee and annual Civic Service, St Nicholas Church, New Romney

**SUNDAY 5TH JUNE**  
Jubilee Big Lunch - Hold your own Street or Garden Party (apply to KCC for street closures by 31st March)



**OCTOBER 2022 ONWARDS (date TBC)**  
Jubilee Tree Planting Ceremony, as part of the 'Queen's Green Canopy'



**LOOK OUT FOR MORE INFORMATION AS DETAILS BECOME FINALISED**



## **Tony Hills KCC member for the Romney Marsh Division Annual Report April 2022**

### **Pandemic**

As we enter the third year of this cruel pandemic. We all must find a way to live with covid 19. I'm proud of the way KCC has worked with our district council and local organisations. Strengthening our sense of community on the Romney Marsh. The success of the Romney Marsh Community Hub goes from strength to strength following the change of name last June. This has been a big success, which I'm happy to promote as well to support.

### **Ukraine**

KCC is committed to help the tragic situation in Ukraine. The KCC website has lots of useful information on what you can do to help.

### **Highways**

Following budget cuts from the government we will have had a difficult year for road maintenance. But KCC is committed to finding new and inventive ways to repair our highways making our budgets go further.

The Romney Marsh has highways like the rest of the County in poor condition. Reporting problems online really helps, the more reports the better, it all helps. Latest update on 'Hammonds Corner' (A259); As I said last year, we now have a design for the roundabout. But funding for the build continues to be a challenge.

### **Dungeness 'A' Station site reuse.**

I have over this last year been campaigning for the existing 'A' site to be considered for 'hi speed' demolition. Making it available as a site for a new SMNR (small modular Nuclear Reactor). If the government decides to go down this route, it will have my support.

### **Climate Change**

Is the biggest single long term threat to the Romney Marsh. But I'm happy to say the EA have been working hard over the last year to improve our defences. Following the new defences at the 'redoubt' in Hythe to protect the northern end of the Romney Marsh, I had a site visit to 'Jessons' outfall to see the successful conclusion of re-shingling to protect the east bay area. Work is continuing at Lydd Ranges to defend the western side of the Romney Marsh. This is all part of the FoCES plan (Folkestone to Cliff End Scheme) to defend the whole of the Romney Marsh. As I said last year, I get many enquiries concerning 'flood maps' showing the Romney Marsh at risk. You must remember these flood maps show the risk without sea defences; we can and will continue to defend the Marsh.



## **Bus Transport**

KCC has been forced through budget cuts to reconsider its community support for poorly used bus services across Kent. But I'm pleased to report that the number 11 service is not one of them. We need to find better supported means of community travel. The Romney Marsh Partnership was successful to receive funding from KCC to do the market research, to gauge the level of support for 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. There has been interest from Lydd Airport to extend the service to include the airport.

## **Medical Matters**

After many years 'battling' with the East Kent Trust over the William Harvey Hospitable Accident and Emergency services being retained. It is cheering to see the new extension to A&E facilities at the William Harvey under construction.

## **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 another challenging year at Kent County Council, working now in a new hybrid system some meetings 'virtually' from home others in person at Maidstone.

**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**

## District Councillor's Report by Councillor Patricia Rolfe

### New Romney Town Council – Annual Town Meeting – 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022

#### Dear Residents of the Town of New Romney and Councillors

It does not seem a year since I last wrote my annual report for the benefit of residents. We remain in challenging times – with the new variant of Covid still of global concern and with the very worrying situation in the Ukraine. We continue to see at many levels where poor leadership can lead to the destruction of dreams, or worse - as in the case of the Russia and its invasion of Ukraine – lives and livelihoods. Hence, as individuals – all we can hope to do is lobby for good and promote cohesion and kindness within our local communities.

I mentioned in my report last year that there has been seismic shift in everyone's priorities (individually, nationally, and globally) as a direct result of the world pandemic. Now the war in Ukraine and the potential nuclear threat has sharpened the need for us all to focus on helping others and create positive connections.

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

You will be aware that I continue to keep healthcare issues as 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. It was hoped by many that the New Romney Community Hall and Sports Pavilion project (which I was steering on behalf of NRTC until I resigned from the Town Council in December 2021). Together with the proposed new Health hub would form part of a proposed 'Health & Wellbeing Hub' for Romney Marsh being delivered 'almost' simultaneously. I should highlight that this holistic approach to healthcare provision has been endorsed by several key stakeholders – the CCG, our local MP, the former leader of KCC and others. Obviously the change in direction of the Town Council in relation to the delivery of the much anticipated Community Hall and Sports Pavilion has had a negative impact on the timing of the delivery of the many benefits that would ensue following completion – most particularly the social prescribing opportunities the CHSP would have offered.

It is to be noted that the project is currently awaiting a review by KCC regarding its own space requirements within the proposed facility. I am liaising with our MP – Damian Collins, senior officers at FHDC and others regarding this.

b) Romney Marsh Community Hub

The rebranding of the Romney Marsh Day Centre as a 'Community Hub' for the whole Marsh was one of the silver linings that emerged out of the pandemic. The tsunami of volunteer support and goodwill in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable residents of our Marsh community was harnessed through this facility and under the leadership of Jon Wilson – CEO. This led to a change in direction for the 'old' centre and that change has breathed new life into this key local 'amenity'. Well done to everyone involved. It is of note that the Folkestone & Hythe District Council – in particular its 'community services team' have supported the hub throughout – financially and through ongoing advice and access to officers. I have supported it where I can via my Ward grant allocation (see below) and as a conduit for information when required. Another great example of partnership working delivering positive results.

c) 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.

## **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, community safety, litter, dog waste, and planning issues. The pro-active response by FHDC officers to the issues of concern raised by residents is to be commended.

## **Council Business & Meetings**

The breadth and scope of work currently being undertaken by FHDC is to be commended. There continues to be a range of positive initiatives that will benefit our District and its residents – both now and for the future. Not least the development of Otterpool Garden Town which is a keystone project for the whole District. After lengthy delays Prince's Parade will now proceed to implementation to deliver new homes and a much-needed new Swimming Pool and associated leisure facilities. The District's social housing is now being managed 'in-house' and a full assessment of the current stock is being undertaken alongside a detailed programme of remedial works that may be required. The Council has previously set aside funding for further social housing to meet the ever growing needs of the community.

Of particular note – FHDC has recently appointed consultants to develop a District-wide Economic Development Plan. This includes two specific elements – Otterpool Garden Town and the Romney Marsh (notably covering the geographic footprint of the RMP so

extending beyond the FHDC's boundaries into Rother and Ashford districts). The Marsh element of this bespoke piece of work will underpin the work of the RMP (see below).

I have attended meetings of Full Council, Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Finance & Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee, and when appropriate – the Planning & Licensing Committee.

The Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee's new approach that was adopted last year has ensured that key policies and decisions are evaluated and considered by this forum much earlier in the decision making process which can only make for better decisions that should translate to improved outcomes for local residents. Likewise the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee's role is focussed on assessing budgetary performance and key policy documents such as the Key Performance Indicators linked to the Council's Corporate Plan

### **Oportunitas Ltd**

I am pleased to confirm, as Chairman of the Board, 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 has now been completed. This has delivered 18 high quality residential flats being made available for private sector rent and the take up for these units was impressively swift with 100% of units let within a few weeks of their being available. The architect Guy Hollaway and his team have created a fantastic, impressive and functional building out of something that was effectively 'derelict'.

Phase Two is well under way. A completely new residential block which will comprise 19 new units for rent is being constructed and it is hoped that this phase of the project will be complete by the end of the year. Again, we anticipate a very positive response from prospective tenants. The two phases will therefore eventually deliver 37 new homes for the District and result in a total portfolio of 76 properties (75 residential and 1 commercial unit).

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 we have made significant progress in relation to the ongoing work of this important strategic regeneration forum over the past year. The Partnership 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, Magnox, Visit Kent, EKC Colleges at Folkestone & Ashford, Romney Resource Centre, Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, and others.

As I have highlighted before, 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

A new Senior Specialist Officer for the RMP was appointed this year. This enhanced role will be funded over a 3 year period by FHDC, Magnox Ltd/NDA and KCC and demonstrates the funding authorities endorsement of the work of the Partnership in delivering or facilitating positive change across the Romney Marsh.

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

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

- **Improvements at Mountfield Rd Industrial Estate**

- a) Romney Marsh 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 was 'formally' opened by Cllr Wimble, a senior NDA Business Manager for Economic Development and myself in December 2021. This impressive new facility is now open for businesses and is being managed by East Kent Spatial Development Company. Two businesses have now signed up for space – which is very positive. The facility has a conference/meeting room that is available to hire.

Businesses interested in the space offered at the New Romney Business Hub can email [debbie.spalding@eksdco.uk](mailto:debbie.spalding@eksdco.uk) for more information.

- b) Expansion of Mountfield Road Industrial Estate

I have mentioned previously that 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 afore-mentioned hub, and the creation of a new road to further expand the estate and open up opportunities for new businesses to be sited there. FHDC has now appointed a contractor to build the new £3.5million road that will provide access to five hectares of Council-owned land. This initiative was funded by Central Government's 'Getting Building' scheme. It is hoped that this scheme will create at least 480 jobs over the next 10 years.

- **Tourism**

The RMP's sub-group is currently establishing priorities for the area and some project ideas are being considered – such as the creation of a digital passport for the Romney Marsh, and various themed 'tours' of the Marsh. These are in the very early stages of

discussion, but it is to be noted that there is a lot of enthusiasm and commitment to ensuring any tourism 'offer' is sustainable and appropriate.

- **Coastal Enhancements**

The RMP is working alongside senior FHDC officers to develop a scheme to improve coastal facilities at Littlestone (Coast Drive Car Park). Plans are being developed to install 108 high quality beach huts on Coast Drive Car Park as well as improve the car park surfacing. The scheme will include a new sustainably constructed visitor hub with WC's and a 'Changing Place', showers, catering and space for water-sports training and environmental or historical education. The new hub will accommodate at least one new business building which incorporates a 'community education space, concession, changing places area and toilets. Environmental measures including boardwalks and fencing to facilitate foot, wheelchair and buggy access to the beach and chalets while guiding visitors away from sensitive habitats; management of existing and creation of new site-appropriate habitats; environmental and heritage interpretation, and conservation activities for local people and visitors led by the Romney Marsh Countryside Partnership.

A grant application has been submitted to NDA/Magnox to part fund the scheme with the majority of the required funding having been allocated by FHDC last year. The project will hopefully be the subject of a formal planning application either later this year or early next in the hope that it will be implemented by Summer 2023.

Further information can be found on the Folkestone Works website (see link below)

- **Community Transport Scheme**

The RMP's dedicated sub-group has been working on developing a sustainable 'community-led' transport scheme. The aim is to purchase a vehicle that will carry residents from the Marsh to Ashford or Appledore Stations thus enabling users to access the employment and education opportunities within Ashford, Rye and Hastings. Vice versa it will also allow visitors to access the Romney Marsh so links well with the RMP's 'tourism' and 'accessibility' work streams. Funding was obtained from KCC for a feasibility study which was undertaken by independent consultants. At the time of writing this report we are awaiting the formal results of that study. My thanks to Cllr Tony Hills for his proactive support for this project.

We are still lobbying for the development of a roundabout at Hammonds Corner and the associated Spine Road from the roundabout to Mountfield Road Industrial Estate to alleviate congestion on the A259 and provide an additional emergency services route to and from the coast. There are numerous other socio-economic benefits linked to both projects and discussions have taken place with third parties to establish the most appropriate route forward to ensure they can be delivered. Funding is, as always, a key concern.

- **Skills**

The sub-group have been working on a number of initiatives – including an evaluation of the current 'Skills gap' in the area, the provision of adult education on the Marsh and a potential new 'skills-link' service. The RMP is also working with the Marsh Academy, EKC, Romney Resource Centre and others to deliver a Skills Festival in July this year. Funding



has been secured and further details on the event 'Romney Marsh Inspires' will hopefully be available soon

Further details regarding the work of the RMP can be found on the Folkestone Works website

## [Folkestone Works](https://folkestone.works)

<https://folkestone.works>

### Ward Grant 2021-2022 allocations

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

1. New Romney Day Centre (RMCH) – new dishwasher to support the Centre's work helping local vulnerable individuals and the elderly within the area

Reason: *The work of the Romney Marsh Community Hub is recognised as having a positive impact across the Romney Marsh – particularly for the most vulnerable in our community and this project will support them in their good work*

2. Light Up New Romney – support for this inspirational community event

Reason: *Light Up New Romney is supported by the local CCT and has made a positive contribution to the local community bringing light into the Town during the dark winter months. Relaunching the event – post Covid – will provide a boost to the regeneration of the Town and help bring the community back together*

3. New Romney Country Fayre – support for First Aid provision at the next (much anticipated) Fayre in July 2022

Reason: *The New Romney Country Fayre is the largest free event on Romney Marsh. Since the first event held in 1994 it has grown to become one of the key events across the District – supporting local businesses and raising thousands of pounds for charity each year. The loss of the event during the pandemic was a loss to the whole community. This year's Fayre will therefore be a welcome reminder of the importance of Community Spirit. Funding the First Aid provision will help ensure that the health and safety of all visitors to the event is prioritised*

4. Romney Marsh Community Hub – new eco-friendly fridge to support the Centre's range of services

Reason: *The work of the Romney Marsh Community Hub is recognised across the District as having a positive impact on Romney Marsh – particularly for the most vulnerable in our community and this project will support the organisation by providing a new environmentally friendly refrigerator to store food items prepared as part of its extended range of services*

5. Romney Resource Centre – improvements to the Centre's support hub

Reason: *The Romney Resource Centre provides essential help for some of the most vulnerable members (and their families) within our community so the creation of a nicer environment for young people, parents and families to access one to one emotional support will help the organisation deliver its services. The funding will facilitate redecoration, soft furnishing and calming art work to create a safe space for young people to feel able to open up and is a positive endorsement of the organisation's life-changing work*

6. 1st New Romney Scout Explorers – new equipment for the Explorers

Reason: *The Scouting Group helps many young people within our local community and across the globe to develop a range of positive life skills. The applicant – 1st New Romney*



*Scout Group Explorer Young Leader Section is no exception. The funding will enable the Explorer Young Leader Section to carry out training activities and to also to help train young members within the group attain their First Aid skills and expedition night hikes with map reading and compass bearing skills.*

7. Strange Cargo – support for a Romney Marsh based version of ‘Everywhere means Something to Someone’

*Reason: The project will help promote New Romney and the wider Romney Marsh and so help support and enhance tourism in the area which is one of the key work pillars the Romney Marsh Partnership is developing as part of its regeneration initiatives*

## **In summary**

The past year has seen some significant multi-million pound investment schemes being implemented or proposed for the area – the new Business Hub, the linked expansion of the Mountfield Road Industrial estate, the prospect of the new improvements at Coast Drive to create a new ‘Coastal Destination Point’, as well as a range of impactful regeneration initiatives that are being researched or developed. This is all good news for the area and bodes well for the future. I am reminded of New Romney CCT’s key vision statement made in 2017 and believe we are heading well along the way towards it – ‘A ‘shore’ path to success for New Romney’.

*New Romney will be a stronger and more dynamic hub of Romney Marsh; promoting and using its strategic location and unique range of shops, services and attractions to increase investment. It will provide a vibrant focal point for those living, working and visiting the area.*

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](mailto: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*

*Former Mayor of New Romney*

April 2022

E&OE

### **REPORT PREPARED FOR NEW ROMNEY TOWN COUNCIL APRIL 2022**

As we approach the summer months of 2022, I do hope that things will return to some sort of normality for this year after all the cancellations during 2020 and 2021.

I would suspect that the New Romney fair will be welcomed by the community as a step towards events happening again. New Romney and the surrounding area is still a safe place to live and work, that is not saying there is no crime in the area, but compared to other Towns of a similar size, the crime rate is very low. Police do receive calls about anti- social behaviour and youths making a nuisance of themselves, but we do try and attend these calls from the community and do try to resolve the issues. Reports of burglary over the year have been very low, and there has not been one area that stands out from another, leading on from that, reports of theft have also been very low. There have been a few reports of criminal damage, theses have been investigated, and where possible a culprit identified and dealt with.

Widening out to the Marsh area of the Town, we did have a few problems and complaints about vehicles attending the Pentlands home site in Ashford Road, but that now seems to have settled down. As I suspect you all know, we did have an issue at the start of the year in Hope Lane regarding a lady keeping dogs on the site, Police did visit on a number of occasions along with the RSPCA, and no offences of a criminal nature were identified, and the RSPCA were happy with the dog's welfare.

Looking ahead to the summer months, we will see an uplift of migrant landings, this is to be expected, however, our partners in Immigration and Border Force are now taking the lead on the problem, and Police involvement is now less. I know there has been lots of articles in the local press regarding these landings, which is why I have mentioned it as it is one of the area priorities. Kent Police do provide officers to attend landings when we are needed.

As I write this there is very little for me to share with you, and much of the low crime rate is down to the community of the area, being security minded and reporting anything they see that they think is not right. Local officers can be contacted either by e mail, or by making a call to 101 and requesting contact. The community can also use "MY COMMUNITY VOICE" to contact their local officers, this communications tool is going from strength to strength and is proving very useful, not only for Police to get a message out to the community, but for the community to feedback information to the Police.

Please keep safe and well, and I do hope 2022 is a better year for all of us.

John Gorham 57106