



# NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

## Town Mayor' Report - 2 April 2019

I would just like to say thank you, to everyone who made the effort to come tonight, it is nice to see you all. The meeting format is different from previous years and the aim was to try to encourage a bigger attendance [Respond as to whether it worked]

As you know, this meeting is your meeting and gives you the opportunity to ask the Town Council questions. We hopefully can answer them, but if not, let us have your details and we will get back to you.

Firstly, I would like to welcome our newest Councillor Ian Jackson, who joined us in July last year. Ian, as some of you may know, is the owner of Sam's Pet Shop in town, and is representing the residents of the East Ward.

I will start with everybody's favourite topic, which we, as a Town Council have no control over, Wetherspoons.

You may have seen in the press that the impasse has hopefully, been overcome. To date, to the best of my knowledge, the contract to buy the old Council Offices has still not been signed.

**CCTV** – As you may be aware, this year we have been increasing our CCTV footprint and now have a camera installed in the War Memorial Park. We are soon to be installing further CCTV at Trackside.

This will make eight rotating motion sensor cameras around the town, along with a few fixed static ones in strategic locations.

It is pleasing to see on Social Media that the majority of our residents support our strategy on CCTV, as well as the local Police Officers.

**Market Town Initiative Scheme** - You would have seen in the press that the town has been successful in obtaining a grant of £100k from North Norfolk District Council under this Scheme.

This was a joint bid between the Town Council, Regenerate North Walsham CIC and other stakeholders. Thanks go to District Councillors Virginia Gay, Eric Seward and Nigel Lloyd, Town Councillors Jenny Melville and Robert Murphy, RNW Directors Bob Wright and Jon Witte, Reverend Canon Paul Cubitt and Matt Smith of North Walsham Play. Apologies if I have left anyone out.

The team received numerous accolades about how professional our bid was. I am proud to have been part of this team.

So what does it mean? Well, St Nichols Precinct, recently acquired by Regenerate North Walsham CIC from Crown Estates, will be getting a complete overhaul, along with extra seating around town, a series of new Notice Boards and town maps located in strategic places, footpath signage along the Dilham Canal, as well as some new gateway signs on the outskirts of town and free town centre Wi-Fi.

Things are moving well, with most planning applications and licence applications submitted.

Since this successful bid, I personally, have been involved in discussions with District Council Officers, District Councillors and other stakeholders in the town, resulting in a much larger bid application under the governments Future High Street Fund.

**Local Development Plan** – On the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019, the Town Council held a public meeting. Mark Ashwell, North Norfolk District Council Planning Policy Manager, kindly attended this and the meeting was well received. The update on this is the Public Consultation is going to be held at the Community Centre on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019. It is important that residents with issues over the Framework attend and make their concerns known.

**Precept** - This year the Town Councils increase is 4.5% on last year. This means a total increase of @£4.28 per household per annum for residents in band D.

This increase will enable the Town Council to make the following improvements and provisions.

**£15,000** - to erect a Vehicle Compound for the storage of all our vehicles, which will free up the Cemetery Chapel, which we can then restore to its natural glory and make it a quiet place of reflection.

Along side this;

**£12,000** – To repair the Bell Tower on the Cemetery Chapel and replace the Bell so it that can be brought back into use again.

**£2,000** – Estimated for the upkeep of the new Children’s Playground in the War Memorial Park.

**£10,000** – For North Walsham Play for their next community project.

**£5,000** – To add to our reserves for a Bus interchange, adding to the £10k that we already hold. Currently Norfolk County Council are doing another feasibility study on this as part of their Highways Network study.

**£10,000** – To have the Pavilion on the Memorial Park thatched roof repaired.

**£5,000** – Lighting at Trackside.

**£7,000** – Parish Partnership Fund. This is a fund available from Norfolk County Council. They match fund our bid application. This year we applied for funding for four dropped kerbs around the town, making the paths more disabled friendly and enabling safe crossing of roads. I am now happy to announce this bid was successful.

**£3,000** – For Litterbins, making sure all areas have sufficient. We will be producing a map of all bins to see which areas are a priority.

Other things that members of the Town Council have been involved in this year include;

**Children’s Play Parks** - As you are aware we continue to work closely with North Walsham Play of which I am also a Trustee. As I said a minute ago, we have again put money in the precept for their next project. This will be the complete replacement of the Skate Park at Trackside with a state of the art equivalent. Another smaller project already under way is exercise equipment at the War Memorial Park.

Through all of their fundraising efforts, in November 2018, we were pleased to open the new play area, also in the War Memorial Park. This cost close to £100k and I would like to thank personally Matt Smith for his and his committee’s efforts.

There have been a number of community events that the Town Council have supported.

**Children’s Day** – This is a day held on the May Day Bank holiday where everyone assembles, both children and adults, in St Nicholas Churchyard. In 2018, this was a thoroughly good day out, with the sun shining and many people having fun. Paul Cubitt, our local vicar, amongst others, stood in the stocks and let the crowd throw sponges at them, for a small fee, to help raise money for local good causes.

I would like to thank Councillor Robert Murphy who continues to organise this event with a small group of volunteers.

**WW1** - 2018 was the 100-year anniversary of the end of WW1. There was a weekend of commemoration events and exhibitions, which included photographs films and quizzes. As part of the commemoration, a Civic Dinner took place and I was pleased that a delegation from our twin town of Friesenried, including the Mayor and his Deputy, attended.

All names of the fallen from both North Walsham and Friesenried were read out at the dinner and it was a very moving experience.

Thanks go to Councillor Jenny Melville and our Deputy Clerk, Tina Foster, who were instrumental along with the Royal British Legion to make this a huge success.

Extra thanks goes to my deputy, Councillor Mary Seward, for the research she done on the family history of our fallen.

Others around the town that I believe deserve a mention tonight, for their hard work and giving their own time and effort to the community over the past year are;

**Rob Scammell** – For bringing the community together with events such as the Firework display and Cinema in the Park. Plans are already underway for this year's events.

I am personally also working with Rob, and others, in trying to organise, what is hoped, to be annual event, to commemorate the 1381 Peasants Revolt. Unfortunately, we have been unsuccessful in an "Awards for All" grant this year, but a new application has now been submitted and we are now looking to run the event starting next year, 2020.

**The Community Shop** – For all their fundraising and grants that they give back to the community.

**Simon Weal** – For the time that he spends in his role of "Guerrilla Gardner". He has tidied up and made pretty, many areas around town.

Others that specifically helped us as a Town Council, I would like to offer special thanks and a small token of our appreciation.

**Nick Hindle** – He has worked hard in helping us tidy the cemetery with his skills as a Stonemason and more recently in making and installing the new Lectern depicting the worn away inscription at the Market Cross. Most of this in his own time.

**John Dyall** – A stalwart of the Salvation Army, for all the help he has offered to the Town Council for a number of years.

He was one of the initial volunteers in the Information Office.

He also acts as our postman around the town centre and beyond to save us postage and updates all of our notice boards without any recognition. John does not drink so we will sort something for him separately.

**Wayne Beauchamp** – For all his efforts in producing numerous Town Guides in the past, and in particular for giving his time free in producing the current one, the first for five years, which is due to go to press very soon.

**Matt Smith** – For his tireless efforts to help us improve our play parks under his North Walsham Play Charity, his assistance in the Children's Day mentioned earlier and his knowledgeable advice on all things fund raising.

I would also like to thank all the Council staff for their hard work during the year ensuring that all problems, issues and complaints are dealt with speedily, professionally and satisfactorily. I am sure you will agree they have worked hard to raise the Town Councils profile.

Lastly, I would like to thank the current Councillors for their continued support and efforts throughout the year. For those not standing in the elections in May I wish you all the best for the future and for those that are "Good Luck".