

# ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2006

## Your Representatives Were:

Cllr. T. Roberts (Town Mayor)	Cllr. Ms. S. Glozier-Green	Cllr. K. Rogers
Cllr. Mrs. P. Kraft (Dep. Mayor)	Cllr. S. Gillman	Cllr. Mrs. F. Richards
Cllr. D. Purdey	Cllr. C. P. Liddy	Cllr. N. Lodge
	Cllr. B. Sinclair	Cllr. P. Hill

During 2005/2006 the representatives of Wivenhoe on the Colchester Borough Council have been:

For Wivenhoe Quay ward: Cllr. A. Quarrie and Cllr .S. Ford  
For Wivenhoe Cross ward: Cllr. D. Adams and Cllr. E. Kraft  
Cllr. Julie Young represents Wivenhoe on Essex County Council.

### Changes of Councillors:

Cllrs resigning this year were Cllr. Mrs. Margaret Davies and Cllr. Christopher Thompson. They were replaced by Cllrs. Neil Lodge and Stuart Gillman following the normal co-option procedure.

### Wivenhoe Council Staff:

The Council staff during 2005-2006 were: Antoinette Stinson, Town Clerk; Christine Pettitt and Xiaomei Li job-sharing the Reception/Admin position; Groundsmen James Young and Andrew Hearn; Hall Caretaker, Mick Wells; Hall cleaner Carol Johnston, Office cleaner Val Tipper and Litter-pickers Ray Smith and Richard Drury.

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## 2005 - 2006

### A YEAR-END REVIEW:

The Town Council has again had a busy year with a number of changes as well as good progress on many initiatives. In addition to Town Council responsibilities, nearly all councillors have other interests in the community as members or officers of a wide variety of local organisations that has added to the ability of this council to take a leading role in representing the Wivenhoe community.

Your Council has been pro-active in its outlook and not just reacting to events as they unfold. We all care passionately about Wivenhoe and will do our level best to make it the best place in which to live.

### Planning:

The Town Council has an advisory role on all Wivenhoe planning applications. The Council's Planning Committee met 17 times during the year and expressed views to the Borough Council on 87 planning applications. Another initiative of the Town Council is the beginnings of a 'Village Plan' and to date two public consultation exercises have already proved that there is much interest.

**Best Value Committee:**

The remit of this committee is to consider the functioning of the Council and how to improve its role as an effective Council, to improve efficiency and continually try to enhance services to local residents. It now meets monthly and is proving a useful forum for all Councillors to discuss ideas and ensure that Best Value is achieved.

One product of the Best Value Committee had been to review the Council's outdoor plant which has resulted in the 27-year-old tractor and trailer being traded in for a tipper truck and small tractor which have already proved their usefulness on many projects.

**Landscaping Committee:**

This Committee has again been very proactive by obtaining wooden half barrels to replace the worn plastic tubs and with the donation of another boat has created a splendid area in front of the entrance to the King George V Play Area. Thanks are extended to businesses, organisations and individuals, who have sponsored the scheme. Anyone wishing to become a sponsor should contact the Town Council offices where they will be sincerely welcomed.

**Highway Matters:**

Following last year's hiccup with grass cutting it is hoped that the County Council's contractors will be making an early start this year. Residents should note that from 1 April 2005 Highways responsibilities transferred from the Borough Council to Essex County Council.

Following complaints from residents the Town Council has taken up with Network Rail the matter of the large gap between the train and the platform on Wivenhoe Rail Station.

**Street Cleaning:**

As a supplement to the Borough Council's operations, the Town Council employs a litter-picker primarily to remove litter from the open spaces, however, he works diligently in the surrounding areas as well. A further litter-picker has also been recruited to concentrate mainly on bus shelters and the quay shelter. It has been noticeable that the amount of fly-tipping is increasing and the Town Council continue to relay complaints about this to Colchester Borough Council's Clean-up Squad.

**The Teenage community:**

The Town Council continue to replace the football nets when necessary and the goalposts are moved periodically to allow the grass to recover. The King George V Playing Field is popular with youngsters wanting to practice their football skills and is a fitting tribute to the King George's Fields Foundation constituted by Trust Deed *'To promote and to assist in the establishment throughout the United Kingdom of playing fields for the use and enjoyment of the people every such playing field to be styled 'King George's Field and to be distinguished by heraldic panels or other appropriate tablet medallion or inscription commemorative of His Late majesty and of a design approved by the Administrative Council'*

The Town Council's continued research into providing a Wheel Play facility for Wivenhoe's many youngsters may also be nearing fruition as the Certificate of Lawful Use for the facility has at long last been granted by Colchester Borough Council. The Town Council will now begin to gear itself up for the next stage in the process.

**Play Areas:**

An extensive programme of repairs and replacements has been underway since last year and great improvements have been achieved. A new wooden fence has been erected around the King George V Play Area and plans for a new fence around the Mede Way play area is in hand. A new mixed hedge has been planted along the north end of the King George V Field.

Following the winding up of the Wivenhoe Carnival Committee a donation of over £2000 has been received from the Carnival Committee towards the Wheel Play facility and play equipment at Mede Way. The Town Council extends its thanks to the Wivenhoe Carnival Committee who for many years staged the annual Carnival enabling funds to be collected for all sorts of community projects. The last Carnival was in 1999.

**The William Loveless Hall:**

The new Licensing Regulations came into force in November 2005 and involved the Town Council and its staff in an exceptionally lengthy and time-consuming process to obtain the necessary Premise Licence for the Hall. The same process is currently underway for the King George V Playing Field in order for community events such as the May Fair and the Teddy Bears' Picnic to take place on the field.

The William Loveless Hall Working Party has worked extremely hard and made good progress in obtaining grant aid for a small extension and the installation of a toilet for the disabled. Work on this will commence on 26 June 2006 and involve the Hall being out of use for a short time. An additional grant was also obtained and this will go towards renovating the Hall's kitchen as well.

Last month saw Wivenhoe's first Farmers' Market, staged in the Hall, which proved very successful. This innovation has been strongly encouraged by the Town Council. It is envisaged that the Market will be on the third Saturday morning of each month.

**Bus Shelters:**

Essex County Council has earmarked Wivenhoe to receive some replacement bus shelters and the Town Council look forward to the start of the programme.

**Christmas Lights:**

The Town Council again contributed money and time to supporting the Christmas lights display engineered by volunteers. Anyone wishing to become involved in this scheme would most welcome.

**War Memorial**

A very successful fund raising programme enabled the renovation of the War Memorial in time for the VE/VJ 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. A Service of Re-Dedication was held on 31 December 2005. Thanks are extended to the 7th Parachute Regiment for their contribution.

**Allotments:**

A Town Council initiative this year was to take an official photograph of Wivenhoe's 'longest reigning Allotmenters' this proved quite eventful and the photograph can be viewed on the Wivenhoe website. [www.wivenhoe.gov.uk](http://www.wivenhoe.gov.uk) The allotments have been well-used and there is quite a waiting list!

### **New Health Centre**

The Town Council has again been taking an active role in pursuing a proper Health Centre for Wivenhoe with full medical facilities to ensure our doctors can deliver the highest possible care for residents.

### **Community Policing:**

The Town Council continues to meet with senior police officers to address the need for more visible community policing and looks forward to the new Neighbourhood Policing which commenced in Wivenhoe on 17 April 2006.

The Wivenhoe Community Safety Neighbourhood Watch group works in partnership with the Town Council, police, public and other agencies. Wivenhoe continues to be a safe town to reside in with low crime. Regular meetings are held by the group where members of the public are welcome to attend. The group continue to be active in various areas giving free security advice and reporting inadequate street lighting and on many other issues. Included in these issues is advising the youth on anti-social behaviour and under aged drinking of alcohol.

Community safety audits are conducted on a regular basis conforming to the Crime and Disorder Act.

The group welcomes the appointment of a Police Community Support Officer and a part time police officer to support our dedicated Wivenhoe Community Police Officer Steve May. These three officers will be based at Wivenhoe Police Station. If on patrol these officers can be contacted by telephone 07966 197245. Messages can also be left at the police station that is now regular visited.

### **Communication with Wivenhoe residents:**

Apart from Town council notice-boards, the Council's principal means of communicating with residents is via its community website, the Wivenhoe Encyclopedia. Launched four years ago, the site comprises over 900 pages of information and attracts around 700 visits per week. News, details of events, local organisations, businesses, people, Wivenhoe history and much more can all be found on it, including Town Council minutes.

### **The 'Community' Bus:**

Wivenhoe's third minibus has been very well used and provides a valuable service to the community. The Town Council helps with the maintenance costs of the bus and office staff keep the bookings diary. Volunteer drivers, who take the elderly to the Monday Club, the Over-60s Club, or on shopping trips provide a life-line to many who would otherwise find it difficult to get about.

The bus is available for community hire when it is not being used by these groups. The suggested rates of donations are reasonable and a short familiarisation process enables the holder of a clean licence to drive it.

Volunteer drivers are always needed - if you feel you would like to help by becoming a volunteer driver once in a while, please contact the staff at the Town Council.

### **Mayor's Charity Fund**

Many successful events have been organised during the year with one more event to go, over £7,180 has been raised so far which includes donations to Colchester Alzheimer's Society, University of Essex student bursary Fund and the Mary Baron Suite. Thanks from the Mayor to everyone who has supported the events and contributed in some way to them. Many local organisations receive a grant from the Fund to support the contribution they make to a vibrant local community. These grants will be given at the Annual Town Meeting.

### **Finance:**

The Town Council's precept for 2006/2007 has been set at £121,108, an increase of 8% on 2005/2006. This represents a rate of £45.21 per year per council-tax-payer living in a Band D property, an increase of £3.35 over the previous year. Income from fees and charges is estimated at £21,763 with £31,361 coming from the Parish Grant.

### **Town Council Public Access:**

All Town Council meetings are advertised on the notice board outside the Council Offices. Members of the public are welcome to attend. Should members of the public wish to speak, a request must be made through the Town Clerk, Mrs. Antoinette Stinson, at least three working days in advance of the meeting.

The Planning Committee meets every three weeks. It considers local planning applications as well as other development issues. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

The Council Offices are located at 77 High Street, on the first floor, and are open from 9.00am to 4.00pm from Monday to Friday. Anyone who experiences difficulty in accessing these upstairs offices can draw the attention of staff by pressing a buzzer to the left of the front door.

The telephone number of the offices is 01206 822864 and the fax number is 01206 827298. The website is [www.wivenhoe.gov.uk](http://www.wivenhoe.gov.uk) and the e-mail address [wivenhoe\\_council@btconnect.com](mailto:wivenhoe_council@btconnect.com).

### **NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF AUDIT**

(Local Government Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 and the Audit Commission Act 1998.) Notice is hereby given that the Audit procedures for year ending 31 March 2005 took place in January 2006 in accordance with the Audit Commission's new regulations. The Annual Return and Audit Certificate have been signed by Lubbock Fine, Chartered Accountants.

**Antoinette Stinson, Town Clerk**