

NOTICE OF ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

WIVENHOE TOWN COUNCIL

All residents are invited to the Town Meeting that will be held in the William Loveless Hall on Thursday, 12th May, 2005 at 7.00pm.

The following is the Agenda for the evening:

- 1 Distribution of Mayor's Charity Fund
- 2 Minutes of the last annual meeting
- 3 To receive the annual report of the Town Council and financial statement
- 4 To discuss any specific points which residents wish to raise
- 5 To consider any resolutions which may be proposed
- 6 Guest Speaker: Stella Meesters of the Rural Community Council for Essex to talk about Town Plans.
- 7 Guest Speaker from CBC Planning Department to talk about the Local Development Framework

If you wish to raise any specific points or submit any resolution to the Town Meeting, please return this form BEFORE Thursday, 5th May 2005 to the **Town Clerk, Council Offices, High Street, Wivenhoe CO7 9AB.**

Successful resolutions will be considered by the Town Council, but are not bound by them.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

I wish to raise the following point:

.....

.....

I wish to submit the following resolution:

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2005

Your Representatives Were:

Cllr. P.M. Hill (Town Mayor)	Cllr. S. Glozier-Green Cllr. Mrs. P. Kraft	Cllr. K. Rogers Cllr. Mrs. F. Richards
Cllr. T. Roberts (Dep. Mayor)	Cllr. C. P. Liddy	Cllr. Mrs. M. Davies
Cllr. D. Purdey	Cllr. C. Thompson	Cllr Mrs G. Primrose (retired February 2005)

During 2004/2005 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:

Following the unexpected death of Cllr Richard Davies, in February 2004, the Council decided in June to co-opt his widow, Mrs Margaret Davies, who had sought to be his replacement. The retirement of long-serving Cllr and former Mayor Mrs Jan Richardson led to the co-option of Mrs Frances Richards, a former town councillor. And in February 2005, councillors were further disappointed when the Mayor of the previous year, Gilli Primrose decided to retire, leading to the co-option of Brian Sinclair in April 2005. The co-option in each of these three cases was after inviting people to put their names forward as candidates and being interviewed by a selection panel of existing town councillors.

Wivenhoe Council Staff:

The Council staff during 2004-2005 were: Antoinette Stinson, Town Clerk; Maureen Goodchild and Xiaomei Li job-sharing the Reception/Admin position; Groundsmen James Young and Andrew Hearn; Hall Caretaker, Mick Wells; Litter-picker, Ray Smith.

2004 - 2005

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.

At the beginning of the year, the Council adopted several key objectives to do with improving the efficient organisation of the Council, road safety, the need for a Health Centre, to decide where a skateboard park could be located that would be acceptable to residents, or decide not to have one if no suitable location could be found.

Visitors to the Council offices will have found many changes. Starting with the creation of a smart reception area a year ago, the lobby has since been transformed and the Council Chamber given a make-over. This has been achieved by our own workforce and the cost of materials only.

Visitors to the offices will notice a mural in the lobby commissioned from former Assistant to the Town Clerk, Susannah Bradley, who retired in April 2004. This wonderful mural depicts a year in Wivenhoe.

To provide a better service to the more than 100 people who come to the Council Offices each month, we recruited two people to job-share an admin/receptionist role. This has meant the offices have been open for longer, and not closed because of staff holidays and at no extra cost to the Council.

We have provided our staff with new equipment during the year, some of it paid for by grants, to improve their efficiency. Working practices have been reviewed and there is an on-going project to update office procedures and health and safety guidelines with the intention of being at the forefront of best practice in such matters.

All this has required the co-operation of staff as well as significant effort by Councillors.

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.

The Teenage community:

At the start of the year, new footballs, goalposts and nets were provided on the King George V Playing Field and paid for by the Mayor's Charity Fund. A youth shelter was installed on the Field in January, paid for by a grant from the Essex Community Foundation, intended by the Council to be a meeting place for teenagers as an alternative to street corners.

The Town Council has long talked about providing a Skateboard Park for Wivenhoe's many youngsters and has also recognised the fears local residents have about such a facility. During the year, we have researched the issues and visited a number of skateboard parks to better understand the potential problems. With no obvious location to propose, Councillors organised a successful 'open day' with a team of professional consultants on 6 November 2004, inviting residents and youngsters to tell Councillors what they thought. This was a very productive event. In consequence, the Council has agreed to seek funding for a modest 'wheel-play' facility on King George V Playing Field that is not likely to attract youngsters from outside Wivenhoe but will provide some fun for those who want to try out skateboards, BMX bikes and in-line skates. Councillors are now actively pursuing sources of grant aid to pay for this facility.

We hope youngsters will organise themselves to raise some of the money for this project and liaise with Councillors. We also hope this project will be a springboard to the creation of a youth forum where youngsters can directly inform the Town and Borough Councils of those matters that concern them.

The Town Council believe these exciting community projects will demonstrate to youngsters that they do have a voice in local democracy and can make a difference to their community.

Play Areas:

The annual safety audit in January revealed an urgent need for repairs to some of the play equipment and that some of the safety surfacing was not up to current standards. This necessitated immediate removal of or fencing off some items for safety reasons. We regret it has taken a little time to get some items back into use. Because of the costs of replacing equipment, we sought a second opinion from another safety consultant. We have given priority in our limited spending plans to getting play equipment operational again at both the King George V play areas and at Mede Way. We have now agreed a schedule of repairs and replacements.

The William Loveless Hall:

A new Licensing Act comes into effect this year and imposes onerous conditions on village halls up and down the country. The Town Council, along with Borough Council licensing officers, have held meetings and training sessions in order to find the best way to ensure compliance with this new legislation.

The Wm Loveless Hall Working Party, comprising Town Councillors and Hall users, has considered the Disabled Discrimination Act Access Audit commissioned a year ago, as well as considering a maintenance programme and other issues, with good progress made. The Hall continues to be very much in demand with an increasing range of activities in which residents can participate, for example, yoga, patchwork and quilting, bridge, ballroom dancing, tai chi, keep fit, line dancing, water-colour painting and badminton, and to take children to the clinic. Wivenhoe's performing groups have also put on excellent shows.

For a long time Councillors have discussed the possibility of installing a toilet for people with disabilities. The working party is now pursuing one possibility that would involve slightly extending the building by the front door. This can only be achieved through seeking another grant.

Bus Shelters:

As one of the first 100 councils to achieve Quality Status, the Town Council received a Quality Status grant of £4,750 to cover the cost of the much requested bus shelter at the junction of Rectory Hill and Bowes Road. This will be installed in May.

The New and Old Cemeteries:

The Council's objective has always been to keep the new cemetery maintained to a high standard. In contrast, we have reaffirmed the policy of low maintenance agreed in 1995 for the old cemetery, so that it will become a natural habitat for flora, fauna and wildlife. The grass will only be mown once a year, in the autumn, whilst the paths will be cut more regularly. We are not neglecting the old Cemetery, just managing it in a different way to provide an area of peaceful tranquillity.

Planning:

The Town Council has an advisory role on all Wivenhoe planning applications. The Council's Planning Committee met 18 times during the year and expressed views to the Borough Council on 106 planning applications. The Town Council expressed a view on the Draft East of England Plan, and is currently considering implications of the Local Development Framework. It requested a presentation on the St. Botolph's regeneration plan and the Visual Arts Facility from the Borough Council which was given by two senior officers.

The proposed scheme for the Water Tower was a controversial application, with Town Councillors backing the concerns of local residents who were worried about their privacy. We were also much exercised by the scheme for flats at The Flag.

The Council has been a party to the Section 106 agreement for Cook's Shipyard that was eventually signed in November. Issues to do with this major application have been regularly considered.

During the year, Councillors have discussed with Colchester Borough Council how to make their role more effective in the planning process.

New Health Centre

The Town Council has taken 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 work in close partnership with the Wivenhoe Community Safety and Neighbourhood Watch (WCSNW) to do all in its power to provide a safer community. The Wivenhoe Town Council conforms to the Crime and Disorder Act and the WCSNW group works in partnership with the Town Council, the Community Support Police Officer and other agencies. There has been excellent co-operation from many residents and between various businesses and voluntary organizations, and in particular all staff members of the Wivenhoe Town Council.

Since the Rural Policing Review of 1999 there has been much dissatisfaction with the policing levels in Wivenhoe. Many of the residents feel let down by not having a higher visible police presence, which the Council fully appreciates. The present Community Police Officer, PC Steve May, is an experienced and helpful officer, but is not always available to carry out his duties in Wivenhoe. Meetings have taken place with senior police officers to address the need for more visible community policing.

Landscaping Committee:

The Town Council will again this year revitalise the tubs and boats around the town. Sponsorship for this comes from businesses, organisations and individuals, and this year some new sponsors have been among those donating the necessary funds. Anyone wishing to become a sponsor should contact the Town Council offices where they will be sincerely welcomed.

A legacy from a Wivenhoe resident enabled the replacement of storm-damaged roses in the New Cemetery to be carried out and still left some funds over for other tree planting.

Christmas Lights:

The Council again contributed money and time to supporting the Christmas lights display engineered by David Sleightholm. This was his last display and a presentation was made by the Mayor in recognition for Dave's work over the years to 'light up' Wivenhoe. Thanks were also given to Mrs. Mary Hignell, a former councillor and Town Mayor, who has also stepped down from leading the volunteer lighting team.

Allotments:

Once again the allotments have been well-used this year, with much interest being shown by new residents. Sadly, Bill Hunter, who held the record for having his plot for over 40 years, passed away recently. He was a familiar sight riding his bike around Wivenhoe. An article on the Wivenhoe Allotments featured in the Essex magazine *Let's Talk* and can now be seen on the Wivenhoe website www.wivenhoe.gov.uk

Best Value Committee:

The remit of this committee is to consider the functioning of the Council and how to improve our role as an effective Council, to improve efficiency and continually try to enhance our 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 has been the formulation of a Strategic Plan for Wivenhoe, with key objectives as follows: a) to make both the William Loveless Hall and Town Council offices fully compliant with the Disabled Discrimination Act; b) to make the Town Council more efficient; and c) to encourage the enforcement of the 30mph speed limit with a new limit of 20mph in the vicinity of Broomgrove and Millfields Schools.

Best Value has also reviewed the Council's outdoor plant and decided that the 27-year-old tractor and trailer have outgrown their usefulness and are to be traded in for new machinery.

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. This year the Borough Council's new improved system of recycling and refuse collection arrangements suffered some teething problems which proved very frustrating, with some areas either being left out or not collected at all. The Town Council has taken the Borough to task in these cases and the situation has since improved.

Highway Matters:

Residents should note that from 1 April 2005 Highways responsibilities have been transferred from the Borough to Essex County Council. This includes highway verge cutting and street lighting.

Town Councillors took up the proliferation of signs in Wivenhoe with Borough Officers, requesting that a review of all signs and general street clutter be undertaken. The Avenue was at last re-surfaced in July/August. Borough Officers met with Town Councillors for a 'walkabout' in November to identify 'hot-spots', which proved useful. New litter bins are on order for the Vine Farm shopping area.

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 three years ago, the site comprises over 700 pages and now attracts over 500 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 'Communty' Bus:

Wivenhoe's third minibus was proudly unveiled on 4 December 2004, after an award of a match-funding bid from the Colchester Borough Council Parish Council's Grant Fund. The

new bus, a Renault Master LWB with an internal hydraulic lift, has been well received and continues to provide a valuable service to the community. It continues to be called the 'Communty' Bus. 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 Day Centre, or the Over-60s Club, provide a life-line to many who would otherwise find it difficult to get about.

The bus is available for use by the public 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 £6,300 had been raised. £1,165 went to the Asia Pacific Tsunami Appeal as a result of the New Year's Eve dance and collection. Thanks from the Mayor to everyone who has supported the events and contributed in some way to them. It is the Mayor and Mayoress's wish that many 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 2005/2006 has been set at £111,908, an increase of 4.7% on 2004/2005. This represents a rate of £41.86 per year per council-tax-payer living in a Band D property. Income from fees and charges is estimated at £19,459 with £32,039 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 two 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 and the e-mail address wivenhoe_enquiries@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 2004 took place in September 2004 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