

# ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2008

## Your Representatives Were:

Cllr. D. Purdey (Town Mayor)	Cllr. M. Iacovou	Cllr. K. Rogers
Cllr. F. Richards (Deputy Mayor)	Cllr. C. Fox	Cllr. P. Kraft
Cllr. C. P. Liddy	Cllr. N. Lodge	Cllr. A. Vaughan
Cllr. B. Sinclair	Cllr. P.M. Hill	

During 2007/2008 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. M. Cory and Cllr. E. Kraft  
Cllr. Julie Young represents Wivenhoe on Essex County Council.

## Wivenhoe Council Staff:

The Council staff during 2007-2008 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-picker Ray Smith.

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## 2007 - 2008

### A YEAR-END REVIEW:

In May 2007 the Town Council was up for its four-yearly election. 14 candidates standing meant that an election was held and three new councillors were appointed alongside the eight members of the old Council who were prepared to serve another term. Unfortunately this meant that former Cllrs. Sally Glozier-Green, Stuart Gillman and Tom Roberts lost their seats and must be thanked for their valuable input during their time serving for the town.

The Town Council continues being very busy and proactive, with three new members injecting fresh ideas and enthusiasm. Our new members are all young busy folk with young families but have integrated well and already 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 do our best to make it the best place in which to live.

### Planning:

Last year's report observed that "*Wivenhoe, like many other communities up and down the country, is undergoing a period of dramatic upheaval and renewal. Some changes are welcome; others are less so*". Change continues unabated and has accelerated.

The Planning Committee's aims remain the same, "*to secure the best interests of the whole community of Wivenhoe. Those interests are served by its views being considered valuable by*

*the local planning authority, Colchester Borough Council, when considering planning applications. So as to achieve that objective, the planning committee seeks, where possible,*

- *to encourage the views of local residents,*
- *to actively engage developers in a dialogue with interested parties*
- *and to focus its observations on considerations relevant to the planning process”.*

Material planning considerations include matters of visual impact, design, privacy, overbearing, daylight, noise, smell, traffic access, health and safety, ecology, fear of crime, economic impact and planning history but not matters of private rights, property values or loss of a view.

This year has been a challenging one for the Town Council’s Planning Committee. It met 19 times during the year to express views to the Borough Council on 88 planning applications. Most applications for planning consent are for porches, extensions or conservatories. Some applications are for single “in fill houses” and small developments. Others are for larger developments.

Pressure to build ever more dwellings within the village envelope remains intense. Some applications are contentious, raising concerns over adverse both private amenity and public infrastructure. These include:

Cedric’s Site: Planning consent has been granted, subject to a number of conditions, and will eventually be implemented.

Former Works, Quay Street: . The original application was rejected by the Borough Council, but upheld on appeal to the Planning Inspector

East Street Fish and Chip shop: This application is in abeyance at the time of writing.

Grassed triangle of land in front of the Co-op: An application to develop this site was rejected both by the Borough Council and on appeal by the Planning Inspector.

However, Cooks Shipyard and The Core Strategy consultation have dominated the last 12 months.

### **Cooks Shipyard.**

Construction work continues, albeit at a slower pace due to an adverse housing market. The number of units has been increased from 80 to 96 within the same footprint. The Town Council opposed the increase in units on the grounds that the local highways would be unable to support the increased number of vehicles generated by the additional development. The Borough Council considered that it had no alternative, but to grant the developer’s application.

An application by the developer to demolish Husk’s House was supported by the Town Council on the grounds that the existing edifice on the site was beyond economic repair and should be replaced by a similar building. That view was rejected by the Borough Council and is the subject of an appeal.

Public concern over the diversion of public footpaths continues and the situation is being monitored. The Town Council does not want the development to prevent the residents of Wivenhoe obtaining access to that part of the riverside. The Town Council is a party to the section 106 agreement between the Borough Council and the original developers Lexden Restorations. It was agreed that the Town Council would take on 999-year leases of the Wet Dock, the Slip Way, the car park, the Dinghy Park and a toilet with a fisherman’s store. Negotiations are now in hand with the developers to secure the maximum advantage for all the residents of Wivenhoe.

The Town Council has also chosen a number of street names for the site so that some of the history of the site is preserved.

### **Forward Planning - Core Strategy.**

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 replaced the system of Structure and Local plans. It requires the Borough Council, to prepare a Local Development Framework. This is a collection of Local Development Documents that will contain the Borough Council's planning policies.

The Borough Council has had to rewrite all of its planning policies. This included a major consultation exercise between 19<sup>th</sup> November 2007 and 4<sup>th</sup> January 2008 (sic). The Town Council expressed its views on three documents circulated in that period by the Borough Council for comments viz. The Core Strategy for the Borough Council, Site Allocations and Development Policies and Options. Those responses are now being collated to form the Borough Council's planning policies and will be adopted towards the end of the year.

### **The Future.**

A number of issues are predicted to become more important in the next few years; Section 106. The Town Council Planning Committee continues to be vigilant for section 106 contributions from developers. These increasingly are increasingly useful for project funding. The Borough Council is currently considering devolving planning powers to parish and town councils. Wivenhoe Town Council awaits the proposals with interest, particularly if funding is attached.

More importantly, a joint paper issued by Essex University and Wivenhoe Lodge Farms Limited proposes a development on farmland adjoining the Fire Station that includes both housing, a hotel, a golf course and a health centre. The land is currently designated as Coastal Protection Belt and that designation must be removed if the development is to proceed.

The Town Council is reluctant to see Coastal Protection status removed. Members believe that siting the health centre next to the Fire Station will make it difficult to reach for many Wivenhoe residents. However, Wivenhoe Town Council also recognises that there are few other viable alternatives to that site and that the scheme will create employment opportunities, particularly for youngsters from Wivenhoe.

### **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.

### **Landscaping Committee:**

Chairmanship of this Committee rests with Cllr. Neil Lodge and he has been very proactive in obtaining grants for trees on King George V Playing Field. It is hoped to refurbish a few more tubs and sponsorship letters are being prepared. 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.

### **Cemeteries:**

Unfortunately both the old and the new cemetery have suffered theft of the old Victorian coping stones on three different occasions, twice in July and again over the Christmas period. Residents living nearby are maintaining a watch but the thefts have all happened at night. The local Police are also keeping a watch. The coping stones are an important part of the wall surrounding this lovely old cemetery built in 1858. Many residents have complained about the look of the cemeteries now and the Town Council is working on a replacement plan, but

residents should be aware that the cemeteries will never look the same again. Sadly this is a sign of the times we now live in.

### **Highway Matters:**

Highway changes resulting from S106 negotiations are still in progress. Public Footpaths 12 and 18 have been closed to facilitate development works at Cooks Shipyard and is in the interest of public safety. An alternative route for all the closures will be via Walter Radcliffe Way , Brook Street , Black Buoy Hill and The Folley. Progress has been achieved with a Speed Indicator Sign, now in situ in Colchester Road.

### **New Car Park Arrangements:**

In association with Wivenhoe Town Council, the Colchester Borough Council agreed that changes be introduced to make the Wivenhoe car park 3 hours maximum stay on Mondays to Saturdays (except bank holidays) between 8am and 6pm. The changes are due to come into force in March 2008. Previously parking was unlimited and this was leading to all day parking which in turn was keeping out local people wishing to park to go to the shops, etc. Responsibility for enforcement will rest with Colchester Borough Council Parking attendants and arrangements have been made for Special season ticket permits for businesses and one or two residents of Clifton Terrace. This system will dispense with the need for the car park to be locked between the hours of 5.30am and 8.30am and should provide more spaces for visitors and shoppers.

### **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. Once again 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 has been very active in forming a 'Youth Council' and has tentatively secured the visit of the 'Youth Bus' for Wivenhoe. The skatepark is being well used and plans are in place for the addition of a basketball area on the King George V Playing Field.

### **Play Areas:**

The Town Council has secured grant-funding for complete refurbishment of the safety surfacing on the play area on the King George V Playing Field and is presently working with the Broadfields Residents Association who have put in a lot of hard work applying for grants to improve the play area at Mede Way, the decision on the funding bid will not however be known until this May.

### **The William Loveless Hall:**

In addition to the toilet for the disabled the Town Council has installed a new entrance ramp, a new fire alarm system and the whole car park of the Hall has been resurfaced. The large Holm Oak in front of the Hall had to be pollarded because it was shedding a lot of debris onto the new ramp. There was much disruption during the car park resurfacing for which the Town Council apologized to hirers but the end result has been well worth it. Improvements will continue to be made over the coming year.

The Hall continues to be well used by all manner of clubs and organizations. It is looked after by a Working Party, chaired by Cllr. Penny Kraft, two other Cllrs, four lay members and the

cleaner and caretaker. Bi-monthly meetings are held where all aspects of running the hall are discussed. Most of the maintenance is done by the Town Council's groundstaff and some outside contractors. Wivenhoe is very fortunate to have such a facility.

### **Bus Shelters:**

All the new wooden bus shelters have been provided courtesy of Essex County Council's Quality Bus Route and the Town Council managed to obtain a grant to replace the bus shelter in Belle Vue Road.

### **Christmas Lights:**

This year's Christmas Lights Appeal has been an amazing success with over £3000 being raised by individuals and organizations. The Town Council doubled its amount it provides to £2,000. The Lighting Team has been busy updating the electrics, which is the priority, with some new decorations to follow. This is going to be a two year plan with more enhancements next year as well! None of this would have been possible without the generosity of so many people. As always, a team of heroic volunteers put up the decorations on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November with the Park Hotel generously provided bacon sandwiches and tea for a well deserved break mid morning.

The official switch on took place at 6.00pm on 6<sup>th</sup> December which was the December Market at St Mary's Church and Late Night Shopping Evening.

A big thank you to all involved! Anyone wishing to become involved in this scheme would be most welcome.

### **The Wivenhoe Woods Working Party**

This Year our volunteers have again worked hard with our Ranger, Richard Moulson. Together they have maintained paths by strimming and clearing overhead vegetation, removing Sycamore in the coppiced area and replacing a bridge over a ditch in Wivenhoe Woods. In May they will be building a boardwalk across the muddy area in the woods near the railway line. It is hard work but good fun and there is a real sense of achievement at the end of the day. Once again a big thankyou to all the volunteers and to Richard who provides much needed refreshments as well as advice and information.

### **Allotments:**

The allotments are managed by Wivenhoe Allotments and Gardens Association with whom the Council liaises closely. The allotments are thriving. Not only is there a long waiting list, but for those lucky enough to have one, the enthusiasm amongst the holders never ceases to amaze. We are looking forward to another bumper year. The Town Council provides a skip on a regular basis for the allotmenters and this is much appreciated by them. The Cricket Club fence is still an ongoing project. With officers of WAGA, Councillors inspect the allotments twice each year. The Council notes it currently has the highest number of people on its waiting list for a very long time.

### **New Health Centre**

This is progressing very slowly but the Town Council takes 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 Wivenhoe Police establishment consist of P.C's Wendy Byrne, Neil Gibson, Rachael Hanlon and Community Support Officer Louise Neville.

These officers also cover the University of Essex campus. Supervision is by Sgt Matt Garratt. These officers are supported by Special Constable Robert Boyle whose voluntary duties are appreciated by the full time officers and the public. All officers use mobile telephone 07966 197245 or can be contacted at 822082.

All these officers and their supervisors work in close partnership with the Wivenhoe Community Safety group providing an excellent service. During the past 12 months seven ABO's have been issued followed up with advice and assistance to the offenders and their families. Alcohol has been regularly seized from under aged drinkers – numbers have reduced in recent months. There has been one cold caller victim – this is an area that is closely monitored by the community safety group and the police.

### **Community Safety Group.**

Wivenhoe remains one of the safest towns in the UK. Community Safety is top priority for both the Wivenhoe Town Council, police and the Wivenhoe Community Safety Neighbourhood Watch group.

Illegal Drug Use: Young people have been using drugs such as cannabis in the main out of curiosity as a new experience not appreciating the dangers. Drug misuse is not widespread and is minimal. Young persons are being advised on these issues.

Community Engagement: The Wivenhoe Community Safety group with the Town Council continues to engage closely with the community gathering information to assist police in targeting of resources to tackle local identified problems such as small number of youths who regularly congregate at certain times and engage in anti-social behaviour.

Youth: There are a small number of residents who view many young people as a 'problem' there is a need in this area to rethink youth in terms of acknowledging and respecting many positive contributions young people do make to their communities.

Audits: The five year strategic assessment and audit on crime and disorder and mapping trends report will be available in June. Evaluations assessing performance and outcomes during the next 5 year period will take place annually.

(Alcohol and drug misuse – there is insufficient information to provide an accurate assessment as such misuse is low.)

Crime opportunity and profiling of streets will be undertaken as with the previous successful audit of road safety.

Flood Alerts: There has been liaison with environmental officers and during times of concern local residents have been visited and advised.

May Fair and Fun Fair: The safety of the public is paramount therefore the council with organisers police and other agencies are working in partnership to assist in providing safe environments.

### **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 on [www.wivenhoe.gov.uk](http://www.wivenhoe.gov.uk) Launched six 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. In addition, several Town Councillors and indeed some

Borough Councillors and our County Councillor make regular contributions to *Wivenhoe News*

### **The ‘Community’ Bus:**

Wivenhoe’s third minibus is continuing to be 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. The Mini-bus Committee meets twice a year to discuss any problems that arise and discuss maintenance issues and running costs. The Town Council has had the current bus for over 2 years now. It was bought in November 2005 when it was a year old. It is still running well and has caused no major problems, apart from the step which has now been repaired. Drivers and passengers alike are pleased with its performance and the hydraulic lift at the rear has been a great asset and is well used.

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**

The Mayors Charity Fund (MCF ) has raised nearly £4,000 during the past year, most of the money will be put back into Wivenhoe to support local endeavours.

This money was raised by many people at an assortment of functions which included the Teddy Bears’ Picnic, a ‘1940s’ day, Wivenhoe Memories, a Summer Ball and the Mayor’s Ball, an Art Exhibition, and day trips to France and Belgium, courtesy of Cedrics’ coaches – all repeat successes of traditions begun in previous years.

The Mayor has also continued to support the student bursary, which is awarded to a resident of Wivenhoe studying at the University. The Mayor would like to thank everybody who has helped to raise this money in so many different ways.

The Town Mayor will distribute the grants at the Annual Town Meeting.

### **Finance:**

The Town Council's precept for 2008/2009 has been set at £139,425, an increase of 5.% on 2007/2008. This represents a rate of £50.07 per year per council-tax-payer living in a Band D property, against £47.48 last year, being an increase of £2.59 per household. Income from fees and charges is estimated at £24,768 with £32,454 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 2007 took place in July 2007 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**