

Neighbourhood Plan

The Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is pleased to have fulfilled its remit from Wivenhoe Town Council and has completed the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan. There are a few more stages to come before that Plan is offered to our community for approval.

It is a legal requirement that the proposed Neighbourhood Plan is publicised and becomes the subject of public consultation before it is submitted to the local planning authority i.e. Colchester Borough Council. The Plan also needs to be viewed by a Planning Inspector for compliance. It is the responsibility of the local authority to organise and cover the costs of the independent examination and referendum. The independent examiner will be appointed by the local authority with the consent of the qualifying body - Wivenhoe Town Council. Any amendments required by either the Inspector or the public consultation will be incorporated into the finalised Plan.

The document will then be submitted to a referendum (probably towards the end of this year) with a straight question: Do you accept the Plan? If more than 50% of those voting accept the plan, it becomes a legal document to be used in all future planning activities.

Cllr. Bob Needham



Health and Safety

As many of you will know, we are currently going through the process of buying the council offices and yard from Colchester Borough Council. One of the consequences of this is that we will then become responsible for many things that were previously the responsibility of CBC as the landlord. These include many aspects of Health and Safety, including the safety of gas and electrical installations, regular testing and reporting in respect of asbestos in the building and water quality.

As a result of these changing responsibilities we recently arranged to have an external audit done of Health and Safety. This included a review of record keeping and policies and procedures, together with physical safety, for example safety and certification of tools, and use of personal protective equipment. As a result, there are improvements which we have to make as well as the additional responsibilities mentioned.

The work is ongoing: redundant equipment has been removed and new procedures and signage have been put in place. We have set ourselves the aim of reaching the highest standards of compliance, which will be of benefit to our staff and other users of the building, and make the working environment safer and more pleasant.

Cllr. Mike Newton

Feedback: Let us have your feedback on what you have read here or on other issues related to local government.

Telephone: 01206 822864

E-mail: wivenhoe_council@btconnect.com

Letter: Council Offices, 77 High Street, Wivenhoe CO7 9AB

Wivenhoe Town Council

Keeping you informed



Wivenhoe Town Council has prepared this newsletter as part of its responsibility to communicate with the town residents. We hope that you will find this useful.

Your views are important so please let us have your comments. Details on how to contact us are given on the back page.

A Message from the Mayor

This will be my final article for the newsletter as Mayor, so therefore it is only right to reflect on some of the things that have happened over the course of my mayoral term.

I'd like to start by mentioning the Family Field Day that has risen from the flames of the popular May Fair. Everyone loved the May Fair but it became a victim of its own success. The Family Field Day has grown over the last few years to prove to be a great replacement event.

Regatta Day came and went over the summer, another fantastic turnout for the Town. Always a wonderful spectacle with such a history. My personal thanks go out to everyone involved in this event, one of such events that makes Wivenhoe great.

Staying with the nautical theme, we now have a fantastic new floating pontoon. The work put in by the members of Wivenhoe Town Council (WTC) to have this financed, planned and constructed was by no means easy. Having this asset means that we all have free access to the river.

The new cycle path.... Yes I hear the sighs as I write this. However, it is finally open. It will bring safer passage to the many cyclists who use that road on a daily basis and, personally despite the disruption, I think has given us a great entry road into our town.

WTC and members of the public alongside our colleagues from the Borough Council have worked hard to produce Wivenhoe's new Neighbourhood Plan. This is now ready to publish, but before we can do that, it must be vetted by CBC and approved in a referendum. This will take place in the next mayoral year (2016/17).

We also lost the old Engine Shed to fire this year. It will be interesting to see what rises from the flames. Again, no timescales have been mentioned regarding the site and its owners.

I will close by saying that being Mayor has been a huge honour and a pleasure too. I look forward to the new challenges that WTC faces going forward, and hope we can all do what's best for the most important thing..... the lovely town we live in..... Wivenhoe.

Cllr. Ian Endean

Public Pontoon

Great news - the new pontoon was officially opened on 7th May.

This new facility is free to all wishing to use small sailing vessels, canoes, kayaks and rowing boats. This is the culmination of a three year project led, in the most part, by two councillors with great support from the town clerk and the other members of the council.



It all started off with a few residents asking for free access to the river followed by the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire highlighting the desire for better access to the river.

WTC investigated many options including the old Bethany Street slipway and decided on the new Cooks slipway. A great deal of discussions with many organisations took place and was then followed by a successful planning application. The challenge then turned to raising the necessary funds so that we could ensure the plans would be realised.

It was great to see local pubs and organisations fundraising to helping us with the goal of achieving the wonderful asset for Wivenhoe people and visitors.

If this has made you want to get in the water we do still have a number of spaces left to rent in the dinghy park so if interested please contact the council office on 822864.

It just shows that when a community works together excellent results can be achieved.

Queens Jubilee Gardens

We have organised for the Essex Yeomanry Band which is one of the oldest military bands to play at the gardens on June 11th (times to be arranged) to celebrate the Queens official birthday.

The gardens have been open for a while but we will use this event as an official opening, so please come along and enjoy the band, refreshments and the gardens themselves.

For those of you that haven't yet visited the gardens they are located beside the KGV field near to the Scout Hall.

Cllr Kevin Read

Wivenhoe Chapel Museum

Our Wivenhoe Chapel Museum will be opening for the summer season again. Opening times are from 10am to 1pm at weekends from 21st May through to 11th September 2016. A number of new exhibits have arrived.

The museum is run by a small group of volunteers. If you would like to assist them by being on hand during the any one of the open days then please contact the Town Clerk.

Wivenhoe and the River Colne

Wivenhoe has had a close relationship with the sea through the River Colne for at least 1000 years and probably longer. The town has supported shipbuilders, once having two yards, one either side of the town, fishermen who caught and canned shrimp and sprats that were exported all over the world, and has been a port of some sort for all that time, functioning for a while as the easily accessible arm of the Colchester Port when ships could no longer easily get up the river.

However, since the closure of Colchester as a harbour in 2000, the authority that was responsible for keeping the river clear has gone and slowly but surely the Colne is filling with silt.

Anyone sitting outside the Rose & Crown cannot help but notice that the mud is slowly getting deeper, but now there is a layer of grasses growing on it. They will trap more mud at high tide and quite soon, the ground will become consolidated, and the Colne will run some distance from the pub across marsh that you might well be able to walk across.

WTC is aware of the problem and has very little power to act but we are taking steps to do what we can. We would like to see the town become somewhere that the maritime community and has a place to visit.

We have the new pontoon, thanks to the unwavering efforts of two of our councillors who have waded through a sea of democracy and there are other less visible pieces of work happening, for example, addressing the issue of the silt building up in the wet dock that threatens to block the Town Drain. Wivenhoe's character has always been defined by its relationship to the water, WTC would like to see it stay as a maritime town and will work to keep it as an estuary town with a proud history of seafaring folk.

Cllr. Nick Tile



Planning Report

The planning hearing for the erection of two new houses on Denham and Trinity Closes took place on 8th March at Colchester Town hall. Both had been refused planning permission in June last year by Colchester Borough Council on various material planning grounds. There was an impressive turn out at the Town Hall from Wivenhoe residents, councillors and the Town Plan group. Also on the site visits, many of the neighbours and children came out to show the level on concern for the proposal.

The hearing had been requested by the inspectorate because there were contradictory statements between Wivenhoe Town Council and Taylor Wimpey (the applicant) about the Town Plan and evidence of usage as open spaces. The decision pivots around whether these two spaces do conform to the definition of 'open spaces'. We had a very prolonged discussion about the semantics of various policy documents, but it's about interpretation.

I believe there was nothing more we could have done to give a passionate and consistent evidence that they were valued spaces in the village. I want to believe that the pressure created by our numbers, and arguments made, helped to push the decision in Wivenhoe's favour. At the time of writing we still haven't received a decision by the inspectorate.

Cllr. Andrea Luxford Vaughan