



West Mersea
Town Council

10 Melrose Road, West Mersea

Colchester Essex CO5 8JD

Telephone & Fax: 01206 382128

www.westmersea.org - email: info@westmersea.org

Town Meeting 19th April 2018

This has been an exciting and interesting year with loads of changes:

- A new member of staff for the front office.
- 1 new Councillor and 1 resignation.
- New play park installed.
- Our precept has been increased to support our current years plan
- Continuous improvements to our Website and communications

Our committees have been immensely active and I would like to thank all the Councillors for their efforts and hard work.

We currently have 8 committees:

1. Bradwell
2. Assets, Facilities and Environment
3. Sports and Recreation
4. Communications
5. Transport
6. Personnel
7. Waterside
8. Cemetery

BRADWELL MONITORING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Members of the Committee attended both Bradwell Local Community Liaison Council (LCLC) meetings during the past year.

During the June 2017 meeting, we were delighted to be informed that the discharge of effluent from Fuel Element Debris (FED) dissolution ended that month and that the Dissolution Plant is being dismantled. The now nearly fully decommissioned reactor buildings will enter a new phase, called Care & Maintenance, towards the end of this year when the site effectively is mothballed with periodic safety inspections.

There has been representation made to the Colchester Borough Council cabinet who reaffirmed their support to object to a new nuclear build at Bradwell. Further representation was agreed by Maldon District Council in response to the planning application for exploratory work to ascertain land use viability for the new station, but on the night, we were barred from speaking. The planning permission was given despite questionable legality.

We have responded robustly to the initial consultation on latest National Policy Statement for new nuclear above 1GW post 2025 and await the outcome of that process toward the end of 2018.

ASSETS, FACILITIES AND ENVIRONMENT

West Mersea Park

- New play park equipment installed in School and Youth Fields. Total cost of equipment and associated works (pathway, new signage, repairs to fencing, CCTV, new bins, turf and safety gates) approx. £95,000 + VAT.
- Grants secured totalling over £70,000 from Cory, CIF, Tesco and Magnox plus support of some £10,000 from S106 funds. Balance funded from reserves plus precept.
- Trim trail mostly removed and other pieces of play equipment brought up to a safe and acceptable standard.
- Regular weekly, quarterly and annual inspections arranged.
- Seats in the "bandstand" secured in place at a cost of £500.
- Phase 2 of park development is to install adult exercise equipment. Funding being sort.
- Phase 3 would be development of the skate park.

Tree management

- Trees across all West Mersea Town Council sites have been surveyed and action plans in place spread across 4 phases to properly manage the health of the trees.
- Dead, dying and unsafe trees have either been removed or are in the plan.

Toilets

- No improvements made to any of the 4 toilet blocks other than under the Danfo contract. The general state of the toilets is much improved with the arrival of a new cleaner.
- Subject to funding the plan in 2018/19 is to partly refurbish Willoughby toilets using S106 money and funds derived from increasing the parking permit charge for beach hut owners from £5 to £30.
- Disappointment over business rates with no discretionary relief being allowed as legislation in parliament had to be dropped.
- Exploratory talks with Tim Young over possibility of help with toilet costs and how best to move forward.

Changing Places

- This scheme still on-going - funding still available and discussions being held with Colchester Borough Council.

New bathing raft

- Installed with help from Borough Councillors Locality funding.

Litter

- New arrangements put in place with Colchester Borough Council to supersede the costly and inconvenient arrangements for emptying and disposing of rubbish from West Mersea Town Council owned sites.
- 2 major litter picks arranged - Autumn 2017 and Spring 2018.
- Working with PROUD of Mersea in respect of on-going litter picking and moving away from plastics to biodegradable materials in take away shops and other retail outlets.

Paths

- Meeting held with Essex County Council to explore viability of the Parish Paths Partnership but this is not a viable option at the moment.
- We understand that the footpath (f/p20) behind the Council offices is to be resurfaced in 2018.

Rushmere

- Additional (and costly) safety arrangements put in place following 2 break-ins.

Offices

- New low energy lighting installed and new blinds to main office.

Village Green - nr Dabchicks

- Action taken to remove abandoned boats on village green land.

LOCAL COMMUNITY MEETINGS

- 3 meetings held:
 - Mersea; called to discuss what, if any, actions could be taken to make the beach huts more secure.
 - Layer; poorly attended meeting unlike the previous meeting which had been well attended.
 - Tiptree; again only one member of the public attended but useful in that Tiptree Parish Council turned up, as did the police. Discussion on ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) and police specials. This to be developed for West Mersea Neighbourhood Plan.

CEMETERY WORKING GROUP

The cemetery working group was formed in early 2017 to look at improving the management of the West Mersea Town Council cemeteries. It was soon very apparent that this group was needed to be a full committee and this was implemented. We are looking at Woodland Cemetery management and will move to improve the look of the cemetery in the coming months with a plan for managing, planting and maintenance. A water leak meant the path had to be dug up in order to replace the pipe.

SPORTS & RECREATION

The Glebe has been exceptionally busy in the last year although perhaps with mixed fortunes amongst the user clubs. It is fair to say that the last year has been entirely taken up with matters relating to the Glebe and its users. Given the first full financial assessment of the cost of running the Glebe in a generation, the Council was disturbed to find that the running costs of the pitches and pavilion exceeds £16,000 p.a. and it was unanimously felt that this needed to change.

Apart from the MIRFC (Mersea Island Rugby Football Club) lease for their new changing facility, there is no lease with MISA (Mersea Island Sports Association) or the user clubs, so the Council's objective was to formulate a lease with MISA which would apply to all user clubs setting out terms for use. The main change would be the MISA responsibility for the internal cleanliness, repair and decoration of the pavilion and the costs of all utilities. A new lease was produced that pretty much relates to the existing Rugby lease with an opening rent of £500 per annum. Since then various modifications have been explored and the current situation is that there should also be a Pitch Lease for each club which would be renewable every five years. Whilst negotiations over the various lease terms continue, as of the 1st April West Mersea Town Council ceased paying for the cleaner.

There was also the contentious issue of damage to the exterior cladding of the rugby changing facility as to who was responsible for uninsured casual damage. This has been resolved by the club and the council agreeing to a 50/50 split.

A major new pitch layout agreement was reached between the Clubs which resulted in creating enough extra space to be able to include a second rugby pitch. There was a substantial cost to the council in removing the old concrete goalpost bases dotted around Glebe 2 and creating new ones, although the Rugby Club did cover the costs of their new posts. The work was completed and many more matches played as a result, however, the new positions may need further adjustment during the off season.

There are a number of other on-going issues to be resolved in the coming year concerning such things as containers for storage, car park surface and management, bike racks and a means of stopping vehicles getting on to the pitches.

The Tennis Club has achieved a remarkable rejuvenation in the past twelve months. At the beginning of 2017, the grass courts were in a terrible state having not been used or maintained for two years, the club building was in a poor state of repair and membership was very low despite minimal membership fees. Now, the club house has been completely refurbished, including heating, the grass courts are back in full action and there are now 98 full members at much increased annual fees.

COMMUNICATIONS

The communication committee have been working hard upgrading the office computers system and phone system. The IT and email systems have been updated to make sure that we are GDPR compliant.

TRANSPORT

During the year we have applied for certain road restrictions for The Lane, Yorick Road, St Peters Road, Firs Chase and Coast Road and this year we have been successful. We are currently working out the final details with Colchester. We are also aware of the bad state of our paths, roads and terrible state of the stroud railings we have been applying as much pressure to get these resolved as possible. We have a good relationship with NEPP (North Essex Parking Partnership) and are working with them to identify the best times of the year for the Parking Enforcement Officer to visit the island. We must remember that they cover all North Essex so we have to share that resource with a large area, who also have parking issues on busy, hot weekends.

PERSONNEL

A lot of work has been carried out in the office behind the scenes. Visually, all can see that the office looks much more professional and Petra and Carol are working hard to streamline the processes to make everything efficient and up to date. There is still a lot to do but huge improvements have already been made. We are also looking to make sure all our staffing policies and working practices are up to date, such as staff training days, health and safety checks and statutory duties.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

This is an immense task and we owe a massive thank of gratitude for everyone who is helping, including Cllr Banks, our temporary co-ordinator who brings all the information together. The main surveys have now been done and the business survey has just been launched. The team is currently working on the results to compile them. We are also aware of the importance of this plan for the future of West Mersea, for supporting our businesses, improving our environment and open spaces and getting the relevant and correct type of housing for the community's needs.

SUMMARY

We have had a very productive and active 2017-18 and there will be no letup in 2018-19. Let's ensure that we carry on delivering and serving our community to the best of our abilities and remits. We strive to work with the community and do our best for Mersea Island. We all know Mersea is a great place to live and for our children to grow up, and this is largely due to a joint effort from West Mersea Town Council and the many volunteer groups that help Mersea thrive;

- Refresh Mersea – makes the village look lovely.
- Community Support – provides much needed support for many people that would otherwise have no help at all.
- First Responders – who are there in those first vital minutes of an emergency.
- Guardian Angels – who respond to pretty much any (legal) request for help.
- Not forgetting to mention The Lions and The Rotary Club who do fantastic fundraising work.

This is just a small fraction of the volunteers and support available and there are also many clubs and groups that get together to support hobbies, interests and each other.