

Wymondham Town Council Annual Report 2006-7



What the Town Council has been doing for Wymondham this year

June 2007

Mayor looks back on busy year



Cllr Joe Mooney, Town Mayor 2006-07

I have been fortunate to serve as Wymondham's Town Mayor during 2006-07 so I know that the job is demanding. But it brings its rewards too, almost every day, and these are often the result of conversations with people I meet in the course of carrying out the Mayor's public duties. I know how much my predecessors have enjoyed this part of the job – meeting Wymondham people as the 'public face' of the town will always be a pleasure.

The past year has seen much activity and achievement, some of it illustrated in the pages of this Annual Report. For me, highlights have included the work done with young people to improve their facilities, and the success in raising

funds for the skatepark and BMX track through the 'People's Millions' competition. The launch of the 'Brighter Wymondham' initiative offers a cleaner and more attractive environment for us all; and the work of the 'Wymondham's Future' group led jointly by the Town Council and Wymondham Community Partnership will give all Wymondham people the chance to have their say in the way our town should develop in the next few years.

My main task has been to promote the good work done by your Town Councillors, and the office and grounds staff who help them to carry out their decisions. Your councillors are elected by you, take responsibilities for the town on your behalf, and as community-minded people deserve your support. I have been proud to lead this team.

Town Councillors

The following councillors served on the Town Council during 2006-07. There have been quite a few changes since the elections in May, and full details of all the councillors who will serve from 2007-2011 are given in the summer edition of 'About Wymondham' which accompanies this report.

Abbey Ward

Mr Andrew Pond; Mr David Fletcher;
Mrs Judith van Hattem

Cromwells Ward

Mrs Joanna Newman; Mr John Simpson;
Mr Mike Welton

Northfields Ward

Mr Len Elston; Mr Mike Gibbins;
Mr Joe Mooney

Rustens Ward

Mr Simon Mitchell; Mr Kevin Cooper;
Mr Doug Underwood

Town Ward

Mr Peter Broome; Mr Mac McDonald;
Mr Martin Wynne

'People's Millions' finds £50,000 for Wymondham

A lot of hard work by council staff and massive community support paid handsome dividends last winter when the town was awarded a £50,000 grant from the Big Lottery People's Millions competition. This will pay much of the cost of providing further facilities – a concrete skatepark and a BMX track – to complete the improvements to young people's facilities at Browick Road Recreation ground. These started earlier in the year with a new youth shelter and multi-use games area. Other activities included the publication of a directory of youth activities, put together by young people for young people.



Wymondham Town Council

How it works, what it does, where your money is spent

Your Town Council – what does it do, how does it work?

There are 15 members of Wymondham Town Council, all unpaid volunteers, who are elected by Wymondham people every four years. The councillors elect a Mayor and Deputy Mayor each year.

The full Town Council meets on the first Tuesday of every month during which it answers questions from the public, notes minutes from its committees and receives reports from representatives on outside bodies. It also approves all payments to suppliers from the preceding month and discusses planning applications submitted to South Norfolk Council.

Some of the Town Council's functions are delegated to three main committees and these meet every two months on the third Tuesday. Each committee consists of five members who elect their own chair and vice chair. These committees are

Leisure & Environment whose main task is to supervise the maintenance, upkeep and improvement of the Council's recreation areas such as Ketts Park, Browick Road recreation ground and the Spooner Row playing field. It has responsibility for ensuring that play equipment meets health and safety requirements and that residents have access to leisure facilities. Other open spaces such as the Toll's Meadow wildlife site and the Becketswell amenity area come within its remit. The committee is also heavily involved in the 'Brighter Wymondham' initiative that was started during 2006.

Finance & General Purposes manages property owned or leased by the Council including the cemetery, allotments and the chartered Friday market. It is also allocates funds under the Council's small grants scheme and is responsible for machinery purchases and the Council's administration team.

Planning Lighting and Highways liaises closely with Norfolk County Council and South Norfolk Council on all road, pavement and lighting issues affecting the Wymondham parish. It takes a strategic planning overview for the town and works in conjunction with the county and district councils. While it does not grant planning approvals (normally the responsibility of South Norfolk Council) the Town Council is consulted on all applications affecting Wymondham. Its remit also includes the Grade 1 listed Market Cross and the provision of Tourist Information Centre facilities provided by the council staff.

All meetings are usually held at 7.30pm and agendas are advertised on the Town Council notice board and the council website. Time is set aside for public participation at all our meetings.



Town Councillors of the future? Pupils from Robert Kett School had tea with the Mayor in December. A tradition of annual visits from the school has been established.

Planning, Lighting and Highways – a closer look

Planning can be a complex and often contentious matter. The Planning Lighting and Highways Committee works within a planning policy framework which explains how planning applications are dealt with, and how decisions are made.

South Norfolk Council have the final say in planning matters. Quite often they will delegate

decisions to area sub-committees or, in some non contentious cases, to planning officers in consultation with local members. All applications are forwarded to the Town Council for comment, and details of these are posted on the council noticeboard. Plans are available for consultation in the office, or through the South Norfolk Council website, and considered at a council or committee meeting where they are on display for discussion.

Letters from the public commenting on applications are welcome, and there is always time at the start of meetings for public comments to be made in person, on planning applications or other matters. The Town Council will then comment to the district council in the light of the local plan and other policy guidance, taking into account any public comments and the considered views of its members.

Precepts, grants, income and expenditure – council finances explained

The Town Council is required by law to set a budget each year, which then determines how its work will be financed for that year.

Where the money comes from, and where it goes, are set out in these two diagrams:

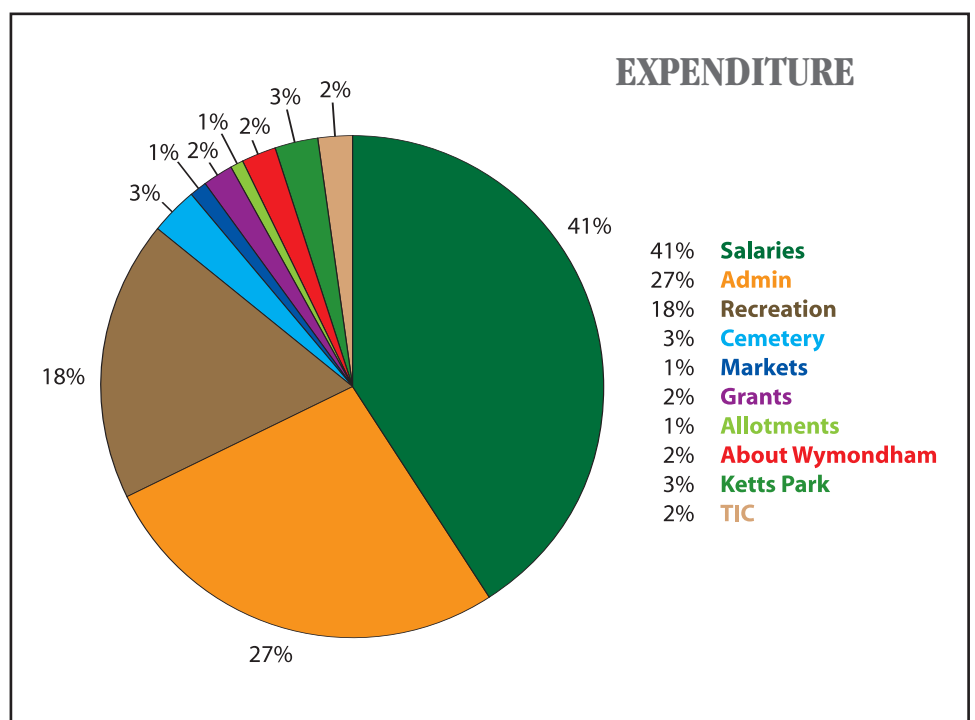
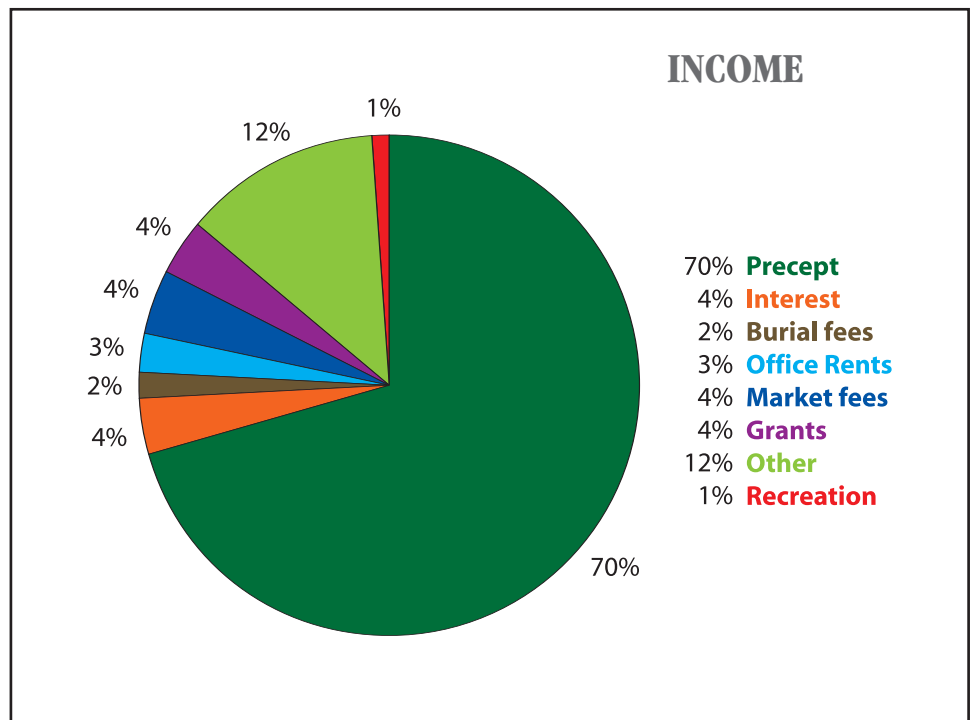
Income is obtained from a number of sources such as burials, market fees, leisure activity fees, rents, grants and income on investments. It is also prudent for the Council to maintain a general reserve to cover emergencies, together with earmarked reserves for specific projects. The largest source of income is the precept, which in the 2006-7 financial year was £285,300 which equated to £60.01 per annum for a band 'D' property.

Expenditure included the costs of maintaining our offices at 14 Middleton Street and the salaries of the Town Clerk, administration support staff and groundsmen as well as the Tourist Information staff. The Town Council also maintains various amenity and play areas such as Ketts Park, Toll's Meadow and the Cemetery. Play equipment is being replaced as part of a rolling programme of refurbishment including the installation of a youth shelter and multi use games area at Browick Road during 2006-7. The car park adjacent to Spooner Row School which is used by visitors to the playing field was also re-surfaced and the entrance widened, making it safer for the school children.

Another important part of our work has been in supporting local groups through our grants scheme. Each year the Town Council makes grants to local organisations to help with projects.

Grants were awarded in 2006-7 to

Citizens Advice Bureau	£2750
Wymondham Community Partnership	£2000
Rothbury Social Club	£2000
Market place bronze model project	£2000
Wymondham Music Festival	£1000
Ashleigh School	£1000
Fairtrade group	£250





Brightening Wymondham

The council's plans for a greener, cleaner, brighter Wymondham took shape during the year under the direction of a community group led by Cllr David Fletcher.

With a budget of £3,000 to 'pump-prime' the venture, the council is leading a community volunteer group in developing and implementing ideas for town improvement, pressing other councils for action where necessary. Projects include new floral features, repairing and replacing damaged street furniture, new 'welcome to Wymondham' road signs, keeping streets clean and maintaining parks. It is intended that community groups, schools, churches and residents will play their part.

Wymondham gains Fairtrade status

Wymondham has been celebrating on becoming a Fairtrade town – the first Norfolk market town to achieve this internationally recognised status.

Fairtrade is a worldwide scheme ensuring that producers receive a fair price for their products, which can be identified by the distinctive logo on their packaging.

Last April Wymondham Community Partnership and Wymondham Town Council set up a joint steering group to achieve Fairtrade status for the town. Nine months of hard work have included persuading several local shops to stock Fairtrade products, and getting public bodies to use Fairtrade products wherever possible.

This excellent news for Wymondham is only the first step. We now have to increase the number of businesses in the town that stock Fairtrade products.

A directory of all local stockists will be used to promote items produced all over the world, including our own local producers such as farmers. Wymondham has a very successful farmers market and it is equally important that we promote fair prices for their products.



A fair price for producers Members of the Fairtrade group are delighted with their success

And lots more!

There have been many other activities undertaken by the Town Council in this very busy year. These include:

- A new look for the Town Council's newsletter 'About Wymondham'
- A new Town Council website giving details of meetings and other information about council activities
- A tourism conference organised for local accommodation providers
- Market cross renovations completed – the first major work since 1989
- Mayor's Charity grants awarded with funds contributed by Wymondham people
- New swings at Spooner Row playing field

Wymondham's Future

The Town Council, Wymondham Community Partnership and representatives of community organisations began work last autumn to update Wymondham's Healthcheck and action plan, a task last undertaken in 2003.

The steering group has conducted a first survey to identify major issues, and a comprehensive questionnaire will be circulated to all Wymondham homes in the summer. The group intends to publish a new town plan later in the year.

Civic award for wildlife workers

The council presented its annual Civic Award to husband and wife team Frances and Barrie Sullivan in recognition of their work for nature conservation and wildlife interpretation over many years, much of it through the successful local nature group WyNG.

It also made a posthumous award to Graham Barrell, who died at the end of December 2005, and who contributed as a volunteer to many areas of town life.



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