

A Year as Mayor



Cllr. Neil Ward
Wymondham Town Mayor 2011-12

I never realised how quickly time could pass, and when I think back over the last year so many things have happened.

The office of Mayor is an honour to hold. It involves much time and work in meetings and administration, but the person who holds office is also the representative of the town on official business, both in the large parish of Wymondham and elsewhere.

As a council we have improved the access to Browick Recreation Ground, started work on the restoration of the chapels at the cemetery and built new changing facilities at Ketts Park. Plans to sell the Kings Head Meadow became the major issue of the year, but in

response to public opposition the Council rescinded its decision and is now conducting a consultation exercise to find out community wishes for the future use of this important site.

Throughout the year I have attended many civic services and functions, which included a tour of the Houses of Parliament, the Justices Service at Norwich Cathedral, the High Sheriff's garden party, the Lincoln Lecture at Wymondham College and award ceremonies at Wymondham High Academy as well as my civic service back in October at Wymondham Abbey.

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Who are your Town Councillors?

Or more appropriately, in a review of 2011-12, who were the councillors during the past year? The following councillors served until May 2012.

Abbey Ward

D Roberts
R Savage
J Wright

Cromwells Ward

D Hockaday
J H Turner
N Ward

Northfields Ward

M J Gibbins
S Jessop (to Dec 2011)
C Longhurst
A Taylor (from Feb 2012)

Rustens Ward

Y Astley (to Feb 2012)
K J Cooper
C Foulger

Town Ward

J Andrews
D Fernee
G Jeffery

Win Win for Wymondham

In April the Priory Garden Bowls Club held its Annual Registration Day, and 13 new members joined delighted existing members in the newly-built facilities in Wymondham's Priory Garden. In the previous summer the club celebrated its 50th full season, having been based in the Priory Garden since the early 1960s.

The new buildings have replaced old ones which were in a poor state of repair and too small for the thriving club's needs. What appeared to be an unlikely achievement two years ago was made possible through grants from The Big Lottery Awards for All, South Norfolk Council, Wymondham Town Council and the Geoffrey Watling Charity, together with support from many local organisations, fund raising activities and personal donations from members.

Overall the new buildings have greatly enhanced the environment of the gardens as well as benefiting the club. Club Secretary, Brenda Woods said "We feel it is a 'win-win' situation all round. Our club and the town have both enjoyed a real improvement".



Everyone's a winner Members line up to show off their new clubhouse and equipment store.

Wymondham Town Council

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

A Year as Mayor *continued*

During my tenure I held several fundraising events including a day at Yarmouth Races, a dog show and a ladies' pamper evening, all of which raised money for the Mayor's Community Fund. At the start of the year I had to decide on several organisations that I wanted to support, and the main ones chosen were Spooner Row Youth FC, Wymondham Explorer Scouts and The Lizard Residents Association. The fund also made donations to Wymondham Rugby Club, Wymondham Abbey and Snetterton Dogs Trust. I am very grateful to all those people who have helped with these events and to all the people who came and supported them.

As the Mayor I was also given the opportunity to have honorary membership of Wymondham Lions and I have now seen and appreciate better the hard work that goes on behind the scene in support of our community. I have also attended many functions in aid of Starthrowers, which as a locally based charity has many supporters in the town.

In conclusion I wish to thank the Town Clerk and his staff for all the work they do for our town, my fellow councillors and all those Wymondham people who have worked so hard on a voluntary basis to make our community a better place to live in.

How does your Town Council work for you?

The 15 members of Wymondham Town Council are all unpaid volunteers, elected by Wymondham people every four years. For these councillors, 2011-12 was the first year of their term of office. Each year the councillors elect a Mayor and Deputy Mayor from among their members.

The full Town Council meets on the first Tuesday of every month. It takes 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 issues relevant to the town

Some of the Town Council's functions are delegated to three main committees and these meet on Tuesdays in accordance with the schedule published in 'About Wymondham' and on the council website. Each committee consists of five members who elect their own chair and vice chair. These committees are

Leisure & Environment, which supervises 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 is responsible for ensuring that play equipment meets health and safety requirements and that residents have access to leisure facilities.

It is also responsible for other open spaces such as the Tolls Meadow nature reserve, the Becketswell amenity area and the allotments.

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.

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.

Agendas are posted on the Town Council notice board and agenda and minutes for council meetings are published on the council website, and these indicate the starting time. Public participation is allowed at all meetings at the allocated time.

Taking a closer look at planning

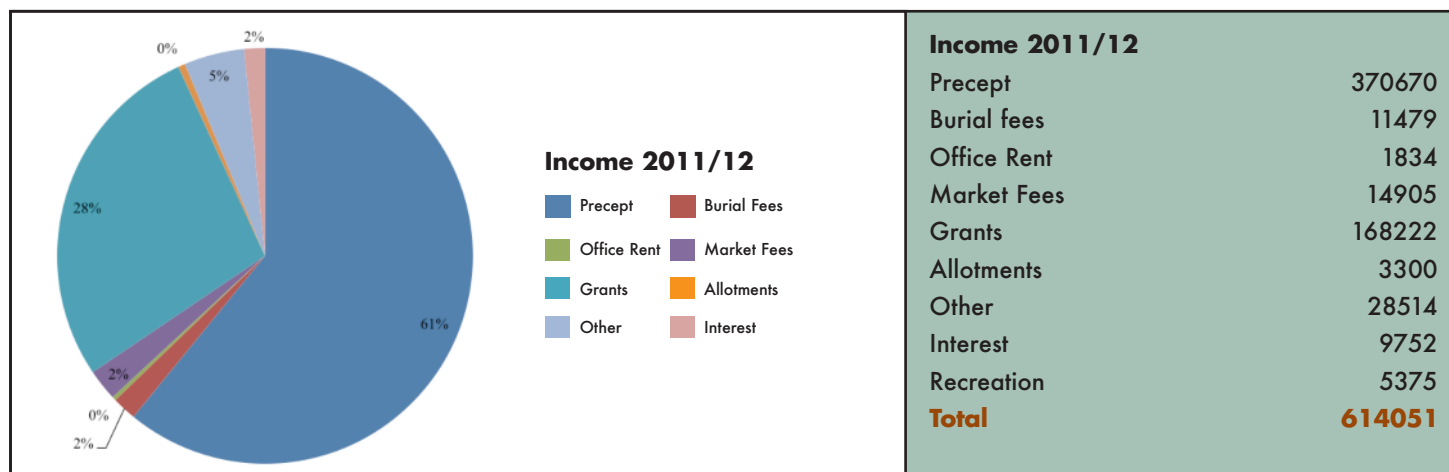
Planning can be a complex and often contentious matter. The Town Council's Planning Lighting and Highways Committee works within a planning policy framework which explains how planning applications are dealt with, and how decisions are made.

South Norfolk Council has the final say in planning matters. Sometimes its Planning Committee will delegate decisions on appropriate cases to planning officers in consultation with local members. All applications are forwarded first to the Town Council for comment, and details of applications 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 time is always allowed at the start of meetings for public comments to be made in person. 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

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



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

Income is obtained from a number of sources such as market fees, leisure activity fees, burials, 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 2011-12 financial year was £370,670 equating to £73.40 per annum for a band 'D' property.

Expenditure included the costs of maintaining the council 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, Tolls Meadow and the Cemetery. Play equipment is replaced as part of a rolling programme of refurbishment.

Another important part of the council's work is in supporting local groups through our grants scheme. Each year the Town Council makes grants to local organisations to help with projects. Grants awarded in 2011-12 are shown in the box to the right.

Grants List 2011/12

Citizens Advice	3000
Pabulum Cafe	250
Wymondham Judo Club	1336
Hub Community Project	1336
Wymondham Music Festival	1500
Priory Bowls Club	4000
Total	11422

Future use of Kings Head Meadow

In September 2011 the Council decided to enter into a conditional contract to build a supermarket on Kings Head Meadow.

Asda held a consultation exhibition at Central Hall in January to present their proposals to the public. This was well attended, and a number of objections to the scheme on various grounds were raised by local residents. The Council nevertheless confirmed its resolution to proceed with the contract.

After further meetings and public representations the Council took account of all the views that had been expressed and considered the matter again. The decision to enter into a contract with Asda was rescinded unanimously at an extraordinary meeting of the Council held in February, and the Council put on hold all decisions affecting the Kings head Meadow until a full report has been considered. As the first step it started a process of public consultation to find out community wishes for the future use of this important site.

Civic award in Memoriam



Wymondham Town Mayor Cllr. Neil Ward was pleased to present Moya Kingwell with a civic award in memory of her late husband Roger, who passed away on 29 January 2011 following a brave fight against cancer.

A retired town planner and a keen member of the Catholic Church and Wymondham Lions, he was elected Lions President in 2002-03. He was the lead organiser of the club's big event, the Dickensian Evening, for many years and its ongoing success is very much due to the hard work Roger put into its organisation.

Roger was a keen gardener and helped organise Wymondham's biennial Open Gardens event, opening his own courtyard garden in Vicar Street. This event gave

pleasure to many and helped raise funds for East Anglia Childrens' Hospices, a charity particularly close to his heart. Cllr. Ward commented "Roger was a true community champion who was always pleased to help in any way he could and he has been greatly missed. The Town Council unanimously decided that they wished to mark his contribution to the life of the Town by making this award to Moya in Roger's memory."

And lots more!

Other activities in the year include support for the Round Britain Cycle Race in September 2011, new changing rooms opened at Ketts Park and construction of a new pedestrian path to Browick Recreation Ground.

Back copies of 'About Wymondham' may be found on the Town Council website at wymondhamtc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk

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£2,400 grants from Mayor's Community Fund

2011-12 was another good year for the Mayor's Community Fund, with £2,400 allocated to local good causes. Established several years ago, the fund invites donations and raises money through fundraising events.

Among the events organised this year were a day at Yarmouth Races, a dog show at Kett's Park, a ladies pamper evening and a carwash.

Each year the Mayor nominates one or more organisations to receive grants, and this year the major beneficiary was the Lizard Residents Association which received £750. The Spooner Row Youth FC and Explorer Scouts were each given £450, Wymondham Rugby Club £400, Creative Arts East £150 and Wymondham Abbey and the Snetterton Dogs Trust each £100.

