

ETON TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2017

It has been another busy and interesting year for the Town Council. Philip Jackson resigned from the Council after many years devoted service and Members bade a warm welcome to George Fussey as a new Councillor for Eton Ward.

Some of the significant issues that have been addressed during the year were as follows:

Eton Wick Residents Association: Following a request from the Town Clerk for greater balance in Council Meetings between Eton and Eton Wick business, councillors in Eton Wick decided to form the Eton Wick Village Association to act as a forum for local issues along the lines of the Eton Community Association. This has enabled Eton Wick to feature more prominently in Council Meetings and has engendered a significant community spirit within the village.

ETC Play Areas: Following a successful claim against the Council by a visitor who had tripped on a piece of loose matting at South Meadow Lane Recreation Ground, a full review of all the Council facilities was put in place and significant repairs carried out across the estate. This was unbudgeted work and so the Council was forced to dip into its reserves to finance the work.

ETC Ground Maintenance: Significant unexpected tree work was required during the year across the ETC estate which again was unbudgeted and so payment came from reserves. In order to ensure a regular monitoring of the various grounds, the Town Clerk allocated areas as follows:

Haywards Mead Recreation Ground – Cllr Lovell
Stockdales Road Recreation Ground – Cllr Lawless
Bell Lane Open Area – Cllr Lewandowski
South Meadow lane Recreation Ground – Cllr Reed
Jubilee Square and Watermans Arms – Cllr Leach

Councillors report on their site at the Council Meetings as a constant agenda item.

The Town Clerk organised a tree survey across the estate to assess the condition of the trees and identify work that is required. This report is awaited.

Stockdales Road Recreation Ground: Following site visits by the Town Clerk and Cllrs Mrs Tarbox and Lawless, a case was presented for upgrading the facilities at the well - used play area, financed by Section 106 funds and a grant from Tesco. Work was completed in the year and has received great support from the local community.

Considerable additional improvements were made to the Recreation Ground with the installation of a light along the footpath, relaying the footpath, pruning trees, demolition of the brick wall which had become dangerous and resiting the memorial slab into the ground. Some of this work was financed through Section 106 funds.

Haywards Mead Recreation Ground: The proposal for an open air gym (financed by a RBWM capital grant) was progressed during the year but each suggested site was met with such local opposition that the Council decided to stop the initiative altogether. At the time of writing the table tennis table remains in situ as a reminder of this lost cause but is shortly to be returned to RBWM for use in another play area in the Borough.

There was considerable tree work necessary on Haywards Mead during the year including one tree that had stretched across the street and was in danger of causing damage to cars and properties.

Bell Lane Open Area: Improvements were made during the year including erecting a gate at the northern edge to deter travellers and rebuilding a dilapidated wooden fence on the southern edge that had become visible following the removal of vegetation.

South Meadow Lane Recreation Ground: An agreement was reached whereby Eton College enjoys free usage of the football pitches during the week in return for maintaining the grounds. This has worked very well and has reduced Council expenditure on the annual grounds maintenance contract.

Progress on renovating the pavilion was finally made with the creation of a working party to investigate what sort of facility is required so that a specification can be prepared.

Watermans Arms Bench and Flower Bed: Work was completed on this during the year and has improved that site considerably. Compliments have been received from residents and shoppers waiting at the bus stop.

Eton Greenery: Following discussions with Eton Community Association, it was decided that in the interests of good management and economy that all the flower beds in Eton should be tended by one contractor on a regular monthly cycle. This was put in place during the year with Baldwins Bridge Institute and Eton College in partnership with Eton Town Council and sharing the cost.

Other Issues: The Town Council was involved with many other issues of local interest and concern during the year including the following:

- Bell Lane Farm – The Animal Sanctuary vacated the property following an unsuccessful attempt to resite their facility from Dorney. The RBWM has decided that the buildings will be demolished and the whole site given over to grazing.
- Memorial Stone in Eton Wick – To compliment the 34 trees that were planted the previous year to commemorate the fallen of WW1, the Council erected a memorial stone in the village centre. This was well received by local residents.
- Neighbourhood Plan – This is in the process of being finalised and will be sent to RBWM for consultation. Mrs Ros Rivaz has championed the Neighbourhood Plan and the Council paid a glowing tribute to her at the March meeting.
- Eton Heritage Walkway – The Council contributed Section 106 funds to this excellent addition to the Town.
- Eton Wick Cemetery – There has been no progress on this during the year and the PCC continues to try and move things along with the Environment Agency and RBWM. The Council has continued its support of the scheme throughout.
- Dog Bins – Following requests from Eton and Eton Wick residents, the Council installed two dog bins in Eton Wick and two in Eton. It is predicted that more will be required in the future.
- Great British Spring Clean – Both Eton and Eton Wick contributed to this initiative in March and once again it brought communities together in addition to generating a large number of bin bags which were collected promptly by RBWM.
- Queens 90th Birthday – Special commemorative coins were purchased by the Council for distribution to all the schoolchildren in Eton and Eton Wick. This was organised through the local schools.
- Bicycle Parking – Discussions with RBWM have taken place in both Eton and Eton Wick regarding the provision of additional cycle parking. It is expected that progress will be made in the new financial year 2017/18.
- Street Lighting – Working with local resident Peter Eaton, the Town Clerk corresponded regularly with RBWM to repair the street lights in Eton town centre. After several months this finally brought some resolution and the situation should resolve itself completely when the Borough replaces all the street lighting with LED lights. This is planned for 2017/18.