

SKEGNESS TOWN COUNCIL



Report of the Town Council's

Activities 2013/14

Annual Town Meeting

7.00 pm Wednesday May 7th 2014

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I take great pleasure in presenting this report of Council activities for the past year.

The Mayoral Year

It has been an honour and a privilege to represent Skegness Town over 2013/2014 in the position of Town Mayor. The Mayoress and I have attended over 150 functions and events meeting a lot of nice people and also making new friends.

Whilst carrying out the duties of Mayor I was amazed at the number of clubs in the town for young people and welcome the return of the Police Cadets. We also met so many wonderful local people as we visited the care homes and the Skegness hospital on Christmas Day.

Both businesses and the public have supported our Mayoral charities which are Boston Women's AID (who look after families from violent relationships) and also St Barnabas at Home Project (looking after cancer patients in their homes in Skegness).

It is an experience that will remain with my partner and I for all time.

Council and Committees

The Council comprises 20 elected members. The Council takes overall responsibility for all decisions and can choose to delegate authority to make decisions to Committees or to a Council Officer, but cannot delegate authority to a single Councillor.

In order to be more effective the Council has created a number of Committees to spread workload, review issues in more detail and operate more effectively. The Standing Committees comprise Business and Resources, Direction and Strategy and Planning and Planning Policy. Additionally an HR and Appointments Committee meets occasionally to discuss staffing matters.

The Council has met on 15 occasions, the Business & Resources Committee on 4 occasions, Direction & Strategy Committee on 4 occasions, Planning & Planning Policy Committee on 15 occasions and the Appointment and Appeals Committee on 3 occasions. Task and Finish Groups that serve committees and allow matters to be examined in depth met several times throughout the year. A total of 41 Council and Committee Meetings were held to carry out Council business.

In addition several Councillors and the Town Clerk serve as the Town Councils' representatives On various Outside Bodies, Partnerships, Liaison Groups and regularly attend associated meetings.

Planning and Planning Policy Committee

The Planning and Planning Policy Committee comprises 12 elected members and usually meets at 21 day intervals in order to achieve consultation deadlines. The Committee has delegated authority from Council to respond to consultation requests in respect of Planning Applications and is also responsible for developing the policy in relation to planning matters for Council to approve.

The Town Council is a consultee and has no power to approve or refuse applications, simply give an opinion. The Planning Authority that determines Planning Applications is East Lindsey District Council.

The Committee has considered 113 planning applications and in each case the Committee decided to support, object or withhold comment. In most cases objections will be supported by the relevant Planning reasons why the Town Council objects. In some cases, the Council's decision may have been conditional. Full details of decisions are contained in the minutes of the Planning and Planning Policy meetings and the comments available on the East Lindsey Planning Website.

The use of technology has considerably improved the efficiency of Planning meetings and reduced the previous mountain of paperwork that had to be stored in the offices. The Town Council is working with East Lindsey District Council to further improve the information available to the Town Council at meetings

Business & Resources Committee

The Business & Resources Committee comprises 11 Councillors including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. It is responsible for the operational matters of the Council, including the detailed monitoring of performance, risks and ensuring that the Council's finances are well managed. The Committee is concerned to see that Council functions are operating as expected. From time to time the Committee will identify issues and report findings to Council so that appropriate actions can be put in place.

The Committee sets up Task and Finish Groups from time to time, to examine issues in more detail or undertake work that could not be carried out by a whole Committee. These groups then report back to the Committee.

During 2013/14 the Committee has been involved in the following:

Governance of Financial Management and Risks

New Operational Policies and Procedures

Modernisation and improvement of ways of working

Direction & Strategy Committee

The Direction and Strategy Committee comprises 11 Councillors including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. This Committee has responsibility for examining issues beyond the current year, reacting to new situations and legislation, developing new policies and examining longer-term financial and resource planning. The nature of the business considered means that issues may be examined over a much longer term than operational issues and so may take longer to complete.

Like Business and Resources, this Committee also sets up Task and Finish Groups to examine things in more detail and undertake work.

During 2013/14 the Committee has been involved in the following:

The implementation of new Cemetery, Burial Ground and Public Property Team. This has successfully improved the quality of the service at the Council's cemetery and given the Council more control, which in turn has reduced risks. The Council has received a lot of compliments about the improvements to St Mary's Cemetery and St Clement's Church ground.

The instigation of a Community Led Plan Committee, with the setting up of a Community Led Committee chaired by Mrs B Futers.

The start of the development of a Council Business Plan at which for which the 5-year vision, aims and objectives have been agreed.

Councillor's Allowances

Under the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003, Councillors' Allowance for 2013/2014 remained at £500. This payment is subject to tax and is paid quarterly in arrears. During the year one new Councillor resigned and one was elected and therefore each only received the allowance pro-rata.

Councillors may also claim expenses (usually travel) when carrying out official Council business.

NAME	ALLOWANCE	EXPENSES
	£	£
M C Anderson	500.00	0
Mrs S Binch	500.00	0
Mr D Brookes	500.00	0
J A Carpenter	500.00	0
N D Cooper	500.00	0
S Dennis	500.00	0
Mrs C Draper	500.00	0
D R Edginton	500.00	0
G O Ellis	500.00	0
Mrs C M Gray	202.45	0
J Hames	217.39	0

R Hunter-Clarke	500.00	0
P P Kemp	500.00	26.10
S R Kirk	500.00	0
C Macey	500.00	0
Mrs T Mellors	500.00	0
Mrs D Milner	500.00	0
K Milner	500.00	42.00
S O'Dare	500.00	0
G Saxon	500.00	40.95
M Smith	500.00	0

In addition to the table above, the Mayor can draw on an allowance of up to £5280 to meet civic and any other costs associated with being Mayor.

Attendance Records at Council and Committees

Not all councillors serve on all committees. The table below lists the number of meetings to which councillors were summoned, the number of meetings attended and the percentage attendance.

Councillor	Possible Meetings	Meetings Attended	% Attendance	Meetings additionally attended as a Substitute
Anderson M C	34	17	50.00	0
Binch Mrs S	19	17	89.47	0

Brookes D	34	25	73.53	0
Carpenter J A	41	39	95.12	0
Cooper N	19	11	57.89	0
Dennis S	37	27	72.97	1
Draper Mrs C	34	26	76.47	0
Edginton D R	34	32	94.12	1
Ellis G O	19	12	63.16	2
Gray Mrs M	9	9	100.00	5
Hames J	6	2	33.33	N/A
Hunter-Clarke R	19	11	57.89	0
Kemp P P	22	21	95.45	1
Kirk S R	22	8	36.36	1
Macey C	37	31	83.78	0
Mellors Mrs T	34	21	61.76	0
Milner Mrs D	34	26	76.47	0
Milner K	19	16	84.21	1
O'Dare S	22	18	81.82	0
Saxon G	38	38	100.00	0
Smith M	34	20	58.82	1

This year a system of substitutes has been implemented for Committee meetings to reduce the incidents where meetings are inquorate (do not have enough Councillors present to legally meet). This means that if Councillors send apologies for a meeting, the Town Clerk is authorised to seek other Councillors to take their place.

Grants

All organisations who request a grant have to submit an application form giving the following details as a minimum:-

Amount applied for

Proposed use of grant

Copy of accounts and bank statements

All applications were carefully considered and the following grants were awarded:-

Carnival Committee	£1000
1 st Scouts Group	£470
The Say Group	£200
Skegness Polish Education Association	£450
Lincolnshire Credit Union	£500
Alive and Kicking	£1000

Additionally a specific grant of £4000 was made to SECWHA in support of the summer switch-on.

Town Clerk Financial Report

The Council is in a sound financial position having delivered its objectives for the year within the overall approved budget.

The accounts will be reviewed and approved by Council on 28th May 2014. The accounts will then be subject to external audit from 30th June 2014 and the Council will formally publish the audited accounts no later than 30th September 2014.

Attached to this report is the summarised provisional expenditure for the year. Accounts and other financial information will be posted on the website once approved.

Conclusion

The Town Council continues to work hard to ensure improvements are made throughout the town for the benefit of our residents. You may be sure that the Council will continue to serve you to the best of its ability.

Thank you.

Councillor James Carpenter

Town Mayor of Skegness