



GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY

**Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on
Wednesday, 13th March 2019 at 7.30pm
in the Jubilee Room at the Town Hall**

Those present:

Cllr Mrs A Beckley, Cllr Mrs S Cullingford,
Cllr R Evill, Cllr A Frith
Cllr M Gould, Cllr M Hill,
Cllr Mrs Hunt (**Mayor**), Cllr Mrs Potheary,
Cllr Mrs B Ridout, Cllr J Robinson,
Cllr D Toye, Cllr B Von Clemens (**Deputy Mayor**),
Cllr D Walsh.

Members of the Public: 15 town councillors plus 20 members of the public.

Members of the Press:

There was one member of the press (Gillingham and Shaftesbury News)

In attendance:

Mrs Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk
Mrs Clare Ratcliffe, Deputy Town Clerk
Mrs Jill Ezzard, Mayor's Secretary

The Mayor, Cllr Mrs Su Hunt, welcomed everyone to the Annual Town Assembly and presided over the meeting.

1. Apologies.

An apology had been received from Cllr Graham Poulter.

2. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 25th April 2018.

Cllr Von Clemens proposed that **“the minutes of the last Annual meeting held on Wednesday, 25th April 2018 were a correct record of that meeting”**. Cllr Mrs Potheary seconded, and the vote was unanimous. **RESOLVED**

3. To receive the Chairman's report.

Cllr Mrs Hunt welcomed everyone to the Annual Town Assembly and explained that the annual town assembly is an opportunity for the electorate to learn about the activities of the town council over the past civic year and the opportunity for local groups and organisations to tell the town about their achievements.

Cllr Mrs Hunt gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Town Councils activities over the past year, and summarized the reports submitted by the committee chairmen. Please see Appendix A.

4. To receive questions from members of the public.

Cllr Walsh asked if the Planning Committee will receive training as this will be essential as the town grows.

The Town Clerk stated that a planning training course will be arranged for the new council after the elections in May 2019.

5. To receive the Charity of William Read Accounts for the FY 2018/19, if available.

The accounts for William Read were not available as it was too early for their end of year accounts. The accounts will be available later in the year.

6. Presentations from members of the public and local organisations:

- **RiversMeet Leisure Centre**

General Manager, Alan Waistell, spoke about the success of RiversMeet and was proud to report that RiversMeet is now the only 'not for profit' leisure facilities operational in the UK as the others have had to close.

- **Citizens Advice Bureau**

David Collins and Elaine Morley gave a short present regarding the merger of current CAB with Weymouth and Portland. The merge has occurred due to pressure on resources; however, this will not dilute local services. An example of the work undertaken by the CAB to help a mother and her young children living in Gillingham cope with a family crisis was highlighted.

- **Gillingham Duke of Edinburgh Open Award Centre**

The Chairman, Tony Baverstock, gave a presentation on behalf of the Open Award Centre with a summary of its history, current activities, successes and future plans. The young people participating in the Award give many volunteer hours to the local community. The adult helpers also give many volunteer hours to train the young people, especially with their expeditions, so that they can complete their awards.

- **Gillingham Action for Nature Group (GANG)**

The Chairman, Mr Bob Messer, gave a very informative presentation on the work that GANG is doing within the community to promote wildlife. The group has undertaken some large projects this year, including works at Withy Woods and the causeway at Frog Hollow.

- **The Town Meadow Group (TMG)**

The Chairman of the Group, Mr Bob Messer, spoke about the development and success of the Town Meadow, which has become a popular meeting place especially during the summer months. There are plans to encourage new members to hopefully take on specific roles within the group.

6. Presentations from members of the public and local organisations (continued):

- **Gillingham Litterpickers**

Shirley Ball, who instigated the litter picking group in 2018, gave an enthusiastic presentation. The group has enjoyed great success with attracting new members and funding. A record of the litter collected is kept; so far, it is estimated that about 460 black bin bags of litter have been collected by the group in just under a year. The litter pickers usually meet on the first Wednesday of each month during the afternoon outside the library.

- **Rendezvous – Outreach Youth Support**

Chief Executive, Helen De Silva Wood, spoke about the warm welcome that the RV Gillingham (outreach youth support) has received since it first visited the town in 2017. The project has gone from strength to strength especially with the use of a converted bus which is parked at the entrance to Hardings Park near RiversMeet leisure centre on a Thursday. During the daytime the bus is used by Dorset Children's Centre and in the late afternoon/evenings by RV Gillingham. New support workers for RV Gillingham have been recruited and currently undergoing training. A new young mums group is will also be piloted in the Town in May.

7. To receive questions from the floor.

There were no questions from the floor.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Minute no. 3

Committee Reports for 2018 /2019:

General Purposes Report
Cllr Belinda Ridout, Chairman

Planning Committee
Cllr David Walsh, Chairman

Policy and Resources Committee
Cllr Mrs Su Hunt, Chairman

Power Point Presentation

General Purposes Committee

Chairman: Cllr Belinda Ridout

The General Purposes Committee is known as the 'workhorse of the Council'. It oversees all the work that is carried out by the Town Council's grounds staff throughout the Parish of Gillingham; maintaining town council property, including the cemetery, the cemetery chapel, the old mortuary and Garden of Remembrance, public toilets, 15 play areas, 2 outside gym, 70+ hectares of public open spaces, the allotments at Park Farm and Cemetery Road, planted areas all over the town, the Community Office (next to the library) and the Town Hall. In addition, it acts as a liaison between the Town Council and the DCC Highways for all local road and traffic related issues. To undertake this large workload efficiently, the committee has many working parties, each with a Lead Member. As well as the general overseeing of matters, it is within these working parties that ideas are initiated, explored and costed and, if approved with funding by Policy & Resources and the Full Council, progressed to delivery. The regular Working Parties consist of:



- Allotment and Burials
- Estate Management
- Festive Lighting
- High Street Facilities
- Traffic Management
- Town Seating and Planted Areas
- Health & Safety Working Party
- CCTV

The Working Parties meet regularly or as required and give written reports with recommendations for action. Their membership may include members of the public and specialist advisers such as the

Dorset Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Gillingham Action for Nature Group and quite recently DCC Landscaping, which means that matters can be fully researched and discussed before recommendations are put before the General Purposes Committee. For funding and policy decisions, the recommendations are forwarded to the Policy and Resources Committee.

This year has seen many challenges and celebrations for Town Council. The Public Open Space land is the Town Council's 'jewel in the crown'. It was exciting to enter an additional two open spaces for 'Green Flag' this year: Upper and Lower Lodden and Ham Farm. Jubilee Fields and Rolls Bridge were all awarded Green Flag status for the third year running this year.

For the first time the Town Council entered South West in Bloom's 'Pride in Parks' and at an award ceremony in Chippenham on 28th February. All our larger open spaces received the top award of 5 stars!



The beautiful summer of 2018 brought people out to enjoy the public open spaces, particularly the areas along the river corridors and 'river dipping' became a popular pastime especially for the young in the extreme heat. This caused concern amongst some residents who were invited to the Town Hall to discuss their issues and the 'river kids' were made aware of the risks to their own personal safety and asked to respect the amenity of the public open space and that of nearby residents. The Town Council closely monitored the situation with the Police Community Support Officers and outreach youth team - RV Gillingham. The activities cooled with the eventual cooling of the temperature.



The prolonged drought brought havoc to the newly planted trees, particularly those on the open spaces of Ham Farm and Hardings Park, with large cracks appearing in the clay soil, potentially damaging young tree roots and a hazard to the general public. Fencing, benches and seats were all affected. An upside to the weather was that grass cutting almost came to a halt, but the hours gained were swiftly taken up with remedial work to close the cracks and the very necessary daily watering regime of the trees and all the planted areas, tubs and hanging baskets. It

was a good decision of the committee to purchase self-watering hanging baskets this year which significantly cut down on watering time.

More recently a hedge has been laid in the traditional Dorset style on Jubilee Fields. This is the third hedge that has been laid this way and will result in a healthy hedge that will provide a food source and habitat for insects and small animals.

Maintaining the 'estate' of the Town Council has become a significant undertaking and the upgrading and replacement of hand tools, machinery and protective clothing is a constant consideration. This year it was agreed to revise the complete kit list for grounds staff, including any PPE and safety footwear. It was also agreed to purchase a play inspection software app and initial training which will be hugely beneficial for the efficient monitoring and recording of play equipment repairs, cutting down on paperwork



and precious staff time. A Full Council resolution was made in November 2018 to expand the existing workshops at the Old Market Centre into adjacent units 11 and 12. Following a Fire Service inspection, it was necessary to replace the warm air heating unit and provide a fire exit door and window to the front of unit 12, plus other ancillary items.

It was a pleasure and a proud moment for Gillingham to host the 'South West in Bloom' judge on a lovely day in July and to accompany him around a pre-arranged route, visiting community groups and 'It's Your Neighbourhood' entries along the way. Despite the adverse weather conditions for competition planting, the dedication, commitment and absolute hard work of the grounds team and community volunteers led to the Town Council receiving GOLD in the RHS, 'South West in Bloom' Pennant competition, along with Taunton and Wootton Bassett. A great achievement, helped by three of the 10 community led 'It's Your Neighborhood' entries: Friends of Gillingham Station, Wesley Gardens and Milton-on-Stour Primary School, all of which achieved OUTSTANDING. Plans are currently in the making for the 2019 'South West in Bloom' entry. Sponsorship of flower planters continues to be encouraged and the first three-tier self-watering planter was installed at Newbury thanks to a local company, South West Packaging.



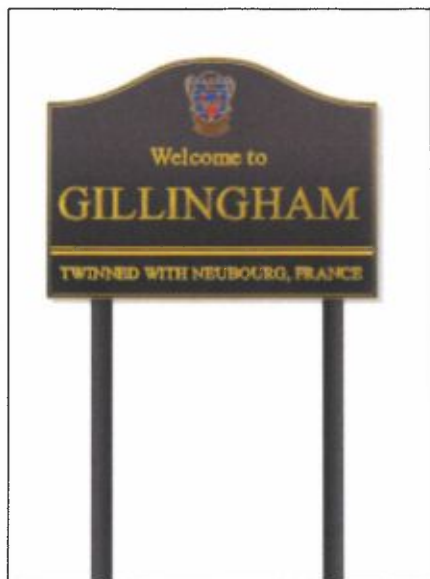
The Town Council's Pollinator Action Policy has gone from strength to strength with community groups incorporating the policy within their planting schemes. The prolonged drought had the undesired effect of limiting the success of new wildflower planting, but we are to learn from and improve on this in forthcoming seasons. The Mayor and Deputy Clerk collected a DEFRA Bees Needs Award in early December at Kew Gardens in recognition of the council's pollinator initiatives.

The 'Gillingham Love Where You Live' logo has been another great success. The logo can be clearly seen on hi-viz jackets available to the many volunteers that work hard to make our town an even better place in which to live, reinforcing the Town Council's continued commitment to working with individuals, volunteer groups or initiatives that promote town pride. It has already been used by the very successful Gillingham Litter Picking Group and the volunteer footpath wardens and will be used yet again to promote this year's entries in 'Green Flag', 'South West in

Bloom' and 'Pride in Parks'.

It has been very encouraging to receive very positive comments from members of the public about how lovely the planted borders and tubs have looked throughout the summer and the high standard of maintenance of the open spaces throughout the year.

The refurbishment of Hardings Park has been a great success and has become a very popular destination for all ages. This year the Marlott Road play area (Peacemarsh) has been the focus of attention and refurbishment plans are in hand. Money has been set aside over in recent years to achieve this which will include drainage works before any new equipment is installed. It is intended that the new equipment will be made of laminated wood to compliment the rural character of the area.



At the beginning on 2019 a windfall sum of £70,000 was given to the Town Council as a parting 'gift' from North Dorset District Council for the town's 'Gateways Project'. A new working party was formed with members taking on five identified 'gateway' projects, all aimed at visually improving the main entrances to our town with links to the town's heritage. Exciting projects yet to unfold, include enhancing the roundabouts in partnership with the new unitary authority and the town's entrance signage.

As a local authority, it is our duty to raise awareness of issues that affect us all such as: littering, fly-tipping, rodents and dog fouling. Over the past year the committee has responded swiftly to complaints regarding dog fouling and 'We're Watching You' posters, designed by Keep Britain Tidy, were erected in dog fouling 'hot spots'. This highly antisocial behavior is very difficult to tackle despite having many bins around the town. Sadly, the posters were found to be removed a short while afterwards and some residents said they didn't like them. A local resident has offered a 'poo bag' initiative for use on open spaces, where empty bags are available for anyone forgetting to take a 'poo bag' out with them and duly replacing it. The initiative seems be working. A new North Dorset Dog Related Public Spaces Protection Order will come into force on 31st March 2019 with a fixed penalty notice of £100. Unfortunately, Gillingham shares one dog warden with the rest of North Dorset, who can only spend a few hours a week in the town.

Discussions are currently underway with the 'Build Love' team at Guys Marsh Prison, an initiative to encourage local businesses and organisations to work in partnership with prison's 'industries'. Gillingham Town Council has asked the prison's 'industries' to supply wild flower plug plants to trial on existing wildflower areas and possibly making bird/bat/bug boxes. This is an exciting project which, hopefully, will develop into a long-lasting working partnership.

The Town Council continues to financially support the CCTV system which is monitored by the Police. Its effectiveness is reviewed annually in liaison with Dorset Police. There is a maintenance contract in place and the older cameras are gradually being replaced with more advanced technology.

The County Council carries out essential maintenance and repair of the highways, fixing problems once they have occurred. Non-essential, preventative works such as regular cleaning of the gullies, (particularly in areas of known flooding) and kerb cleansing is the devolved responsibility of the Town Council along certain roads, working under licence with the County Council. Unfortunately, at no fault of the Town Council, the three-year contract with a private contractor has become unviable. It was recognized that the programme of works is very important for the appearance of the town and the gully emptying has adverted flooding during heavy rains. A working party was urgently set up to consider the options, but it was decided to wait until the formation of the new Dorset Council (April 2019) before agreeing any future contract. A sum of £9,000 has been included in the Precept 2019/20 for non-essential highway works.

Rendezvous Gillingham - the outreach youth work project - commenced in September 2017 and has proved successful in reaching young people who do not wish to engage with any formal youth activity or programme. A presentation to members made it very clear that this work needs to continue, and funding was agreed for this financial year. An outreach bus will be parked at RiversMeet car park on Thursday evenings. The same bus will be used by Dorset Children's Centre during the day.



For a few weeks over the summer and autumn, the Town Council supported groups of young people (16 to 17 years), participating in the National Citizen Service. The theme last summer was mental health and well-being and a very colourful bench was made and installed at Hardings Park. Another project was making information boards for use on our open spaces.

It has been a pleasure to take up the Chair of General Purposes over the last year and I personally thank the individual members of

the committee for all their hard work and dedication, particularly those leading and being part of the working parties. There is no doubt that without their input, it would be impossible for this council to have achieved as much as it has done over the past year.

I also thank the Committee Clerk and the Works Manager and the team for their dedication and commitment throughout the year. It has been a very busy but very fulfilling year.

The Working Parties:

There are seven working parties which make a strong contribution to the success of the General Purposes Committee and, in turn, the Town Council as a whole.

1. Allotments and Burials (Lead Member: Donna Toye)

This working party advises on the allotments and burial fees each year and reviews cemetery and allotment rules and regulations.

A member of the working party liaises with the Allotment Association on the such matters as the provision of water supply and maintenance of the sites.

2. Estate Management (Lead Member: Cllr Barry Von Clemens)

This working party meets regularly and oversees the management of the open spaces, planted areas and play areas. Major achievement of this working party is the success with the Green Flag Awards, Britain in Bloom South West Region Pride in Parks Award and Pennant Award.

3. Festive Lighting and Christmas Parade (Lead Member: The Mayor)

This working party meets regularly in the lead up to the Festive Lighting and Christmas Parade to decide on the format of the event and organises the festive lighting in the town centre. The event is well supported in the town and each year the working party tries to bring something new to the event.

4. Health and Safety (Lead Member: Cllr John Robinson)

This is a small working party and oversees all Health and Safety matters at the Town Council.

5. High Street Facilities (Lead Member: Cllr Donna Toye)

This working party is currently working on the project to refurbish the High Street toilets to provide a multi use toilet with baby changing / disabled access facility, alongside a community office facility. This project should be completed in 2019.

6. Town Seating & Planted Areas Working Party (Lead Member, Cllr Belinda Ridout)

The Town Seating and Planted Areas Working Party has worked closely with the District Council's Conservation Department, Tree and Landscape Officer, DCC Highways and DCC Bridge Department, local history and heritage groups. Working in accordance with an Appraisal Document drawn up by the Gillingham Conservation Area Working Party, the scheme of works drawn up in 2016 has now been completed including the rebuilding of the 'Long' Bed and 'D' bed to the front of the Town Bridge car park, along with flag pole and the refurbishment of the area around the oak tree adjacent to the Town Bridge.

In 2014 six street lights in the Gillingham Conservation Area were upgraded to Heritage style lights and the Town Council agreed to upgrade a further 7 street lights and 1 wall light in The Square and at the bottom of the High Street, which were completed by the end of Spring 2018.

It was agreed to replace the bench owned and maintained by Gillingham Town Council, adjacent to the main entrance to the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, with an Anti-Vandal KC bench made from steel and painted in acrylic black paint. Southern Co-op donated £500 to the project through their 'Love Your Neighbourhood' local funding scheme. At the same time the old rubbish bin was replaced with a Covent Garden black cast iron bin in keeping with the Heritage style within the Town Conservation Area.

The Town Council UPVC notice board situated outside of Rawson Court in the High Street was removed and a Heritage style noticeboard of the same style and design as that in Gillingham Cemetery, was installed next to the bicycle stands in front of the Town Bridge Car Park.

The current project is for two Heritage style benches on the newly refurbished area adjacent to the Town Bridge. Art students from Gillingham School have been invited to create designs for a feature bench and quotes are being sought based on their ideas which depict, amongst other themes, the town's association with John Constable.

The out of date tourist information board has yet to be removed. A decision has yet to be made on replacing this with an up-to-date version in heritage style.

Thanks to all members of the working party for their ideas and continued commitment to the projects in hand and to the Town Clerk for her note taking.

7. Traffic Management Working Party (Lead Member: Cllr Belinda Ridout)

The Traffic Management Working Party meets on a regular basis and has had a busy year working with the community, local organisations and businesses, covering the Gillingham area and members are thanked for their hard work and commitment over the last year. Traffic issues can be broadly grouped into the following, but overlap each other in most cases:

- Pedestrian safety
- Traffic congestion/traffic flow
- Speeding
- Nuisance parking
- Traffic calming
- Highway signage

Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) requests put forward in previous years for parking restrictions on New Road, Wyke Road, School Road and Bay Road are slowly making their way up Highway's 'approved list'. As the requests do not rank as 'high priority', it has been necessary for the working party to continue to work with DCC Highways, Parking Services, Wiltshire and Dorset Fire and Rescue and Dorset Police to explore all possible alternative solutions before putting in a TRO request. The DCC Community Highways Officer for Gillingham, Roger Bell, attends every working party meeting, offering his expertise and advice, providing a very valuable link between our work with the community and DCC Highways. The support of the local PCSO's (Police Community Support Officer) is very much welcomed, contributing valuable local knowledge to discussion and highlighting concerns which can be taken forward through the Traffic Management agenda. Working in liaison with PCSO's and the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, has highlighted areas where hindrance to emergency access could cause danger to life and the necessary action has been taken to rectify where possible, working with land owners and advising residents. With Highway's imminent adoption of the roads at Fernbrook Lane and Trent Square, 'Keep Clear' road markings are now to be installed on the developer side of the emergency access into Rookery Close and Kings Chase and a note has been kept on file by Highways for the same to be installed to the emergency access linking the new Park Farm development to Trent Square and Cerne Avenue, before the development is completed.

The working party has shown on-going support for community led safety campaigns. Gillingham Town Council approved financial support for a TRO for traffic calming at Milton-on-Stour and in February this year a 30mph was implemented along Post Office Road and the B3092, which by all accounts has certainly slowed traffic.

The SID (Speed Indicator Device) now operates on a Licence Agreement with Highways, which is a mechanism put in place to ensure that all community SIDs are operated in the same way. Following discussions with Highways the SID now circulates three locations (Wyke Road, Peacemarsh and New Road) on a 3-week rota. The Town Council funded the conversion of all three SID poles to solar power which seems to be working well. The temporary SID on Bay Road had to be removed because it did not fit Highways criteria. When funds are available there is the aspiration to convert the other two locations (Shaftesbury Road and Bay Road) to solar, which would necessitate the purchase of a second SID.

Speeding and inappropriate parking causing danger to highway users, is taken very seriously and action is taken where appropriate, working with Dorset Police, Parking Services and DCC Highways, but sometimes there is no easy solution. The pedestrian footway scheme proposed by DCC Highways between Lydfords Lane and Clarendon Close was dropped following significant public concern about the cost of the scheme in relation to its effectiveness in limiting on-road parking, visibility at the junctions and generally reducing traffic speed. There were also concerns about reduced on road parking. After further consultation with residents, the Town Council subsequently made a request to Highways for double yellow lines between Brewery Lane and Clarendon Close and a single yellow line between Clarendon Close and Lydfords Lane. A further request was made to Highways to investigate a prioritization scheme for Wyke Road at the pinch point between the Brewery Cottages which will require supporting evidence.

Preliminary plans for sustainable transport improvements at the Shaftesbury Road/New Road, Newbury/Le Neubourg Way, Station Road/Le Neubourg way junctions and new sustainable transport links (improving walking and cycling facilities) have been drawn up by DCC and the Dorset Councils Partnership in consultation with the South Gillingham Consortium, bringing forward the build out of the southern extension. Highways welcomed local traffic knowledge and traffic concerns highlighted to the working party and will be returning to present their draft proposals to the Town Council, which will subsequently go out to public consultation.

Extreme weather has caused significant deterioration of the roads in and around Gillingham and pot holes and blocked gulley complaints remain high. These are reported through 'Gillingham Direct' and followed up by Traffic Management should any problems persist beyond the designated call out time. Phase 2 of the surface top-dressing took place around Peacemarsh last year, which seemed to go much smoother than at Wyke. Wyke Road has now been properly resurfaced.

All public concerns and requests to the Working Party are discussed and wherever possible, recommendations are made to the General Proposes Committee for action. Explanations for decisions made are always communicated back to the originator, whether positive or negative, and it is made clear that any recommendation approved by Gillingham Town Council is still subject to DCC Highways approval.

Planning Committee

Chairman - Cllr David Walsh

Gillingham Town Council Planning Committee consists of eleven town councillors. Meetings are held twice a month and members of the public are encouraged to, and often attend. Town Councillors who are not members of the committee and consequently not entitled to vote, often attend planning committee meetings to represent the views of residents and speak on their behalf. North Dorset District Council are the Local Planning Authority and decide if an application should be granted or refused and this must be in line with national and local policy. Gillingham Town Council are consultees and are asked to comment and make recommendations based upon local knowledge on applications within the ward boundary. These comments are considered by the District Council Case Officer before a decision is made and if the application goes before the District Council's Planning Committee a member of the Town Council can attend to represent the views of our committee and clarify any points. In the new Dorset Council the constitution allows for towns and parishes to call applications to the main Planning Committee if there are correct planning considerations

Gillingham Town Council Planning Committee lead the way in Dorset as one of the first town councils to go completely paperless, but in bringing North Dorset, West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Councils together under the Dorset Councils Partnership there have been some issues with aligning the IT systems which meant that things didn't always run perfectly smoothly. In forming the unitary Dorset Council even more systems will have to be aligned into one but that has been planned for and so a smooth transition is expected.

As North Dorset District Council is still lacking a 5-year Housing Land Supply, Gillingham has been subjected to planning applications from speculative developers which were not allocated within the Local Plan which has been understandably disconcerting to those residents that contributed to the Master Planning of the Southern Extension laid out in the North Dorset Local Plan. In the last week on the 26th February the Outline Planning for the Extension to Gillingham was agreed by the District Council after having been recommended for approval by the Town's Planning Committee the Chairman of which spoke at NDDC's Committee. Not one person spoke against the recommendation.

At the same planning meeting the application for 50 houses on Land East of Barnaby Mead was heard. Though this has approved Outline Planning permission granted, the final details through the reserved matters application were contentious and consequently many residents turned up to speak and address councillors. There had been a site visit by councillors who were able to see the issues that were being raised as one problem with looking at paper plans is that they do not show the contours and gradients of a site so what looked acceptable on paper was shown to be unacceptable in reality. The committee supported the views of residents and recommended refusal of the reserved matters application. There will be development on that site, that is definite because it has been granted outline consent but we, the public and the committee want to make sure that it is the best development that we can have, one that has a sensitive transition from the new development through to that already there.

Over the years that I have been working with Officers and Members to develop a Local Plan for North Dorset we focused on putting policies in place that would ensure any new

development would be sympathetic to established neighbouring properties. Policy 24 concentrates on design and Policy 25 Amenity, these are very important as all recommendations that the committee makes to NDDCs Planning Committee have to be grounded in policy, whether Local, through the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan or National through the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) and Planning Policy guidance.

We encourage members of the public to attend our Planning meetings and often invite applicants to present to committee and be available to answer questions because the really demoralising part of our work is when we have to refuse an application because we do not have enough information to feel safe in approving it.

The applications considered by the committee over the past twelve months have been varied and include: new dwellings; extensions; agricultural buildings; work to listed buildings; applications for advertisement consent; applications for changes of use; and applications for larger developments south of the town. The past twelve months has seen a good standard of applications, with creative and innovative proposals being submitted. The committee has also been consulted on the Draft of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Waste Plan and the North Dorset Local Plan Review Issues and Options Consultation.

It has been reassuring to see that businesses also wish to invest in our town and applications have been submitted which will enhance the town and provide additional business and retail opportunities. An application has been approved for a development to include shops, restaurants, cafes and takeaways at Harwood Retail Centre in Station Road though this was contentious. These applications have to be carefully considered and issues such as parking, access and highway matters are carefully looked at by the County Council Highways Authority before the District Council can issue a decision.

Applications are also carefully considered by other consultees such as the District Tree and Landscape Officer, Environmental Health, the Environment Agency, Sports England, Historic England and Natural England.

The committee are fortunate to have the support of a volunteer Tree Warden, Mr Ben Drew, who has guided the committee through many applications and I wish to thank Ben for all his support and advice during the past year.

The committee also deals with footpath matters and liaises with Gillingham's Rights of Way Liaison Officer, Mrs Sheila Messer. Thanks, must go to Mrs Messer who gives a great deal of valuable information and time to the committee and keeps us fully briefed on the excellent work being carried out by the 'Walkers are Welcome Group'. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Sheila and all the volunteers for their excellent work on the footpath network in and around Gillingham.

The Conservation Area Working Party, under lead member Cllr Mrs Hunt, consists of five members of the planning committee, the Committee Clerk Mrs Hawkins, and representatives from the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Group and Local History Society. For the past four years the working party has collated information, held consultations and worked on the production of an appraisal document for Colesbrook, with the aim of achieving conservation area status. On Monday 18th September 2017, the working party submitted evidence to the Cabinet at North Dorset District Council for consideration. Following a lengthy and complicated procedure, Colesbrook was granted Conservation Area status in September 2017. In October 2017, the working party secured funding towards the production of an appraisal document for Gillingham, with the aim of extending the existing conservation area in the town. The working party are working with a Heritage Consultant and under the guidance of the Dorset Councils Partnership Conservation Team. I wish to take the opportunity to thank all the members of the working party for their hard work, dedication and persistence.

The Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan was officially 'made' by North Dorset District Council on 27 July 2018. Following a majority 'yes' vote in the referendum, the decision was taken to make the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan part of the development plan for the Gillingham neighbourhood area. I would like to thank the members of the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Group for all their hard work and dedication.

Finally, I would like to thank my Deputy Chairman Cllr Mrs Val Potheary who has covered for me in my absence. Cllr Mrs Potheary has provided a great deal of help and support to me over the past year and shared her planning experience and know-how with newer members. We are extremely grateful to her. I also wish to thank Cllr Alan Frith for operating all our IT equipment during committee meetings, the Town Clerk, because we are very fortunate to have our own Planning Minister in the form of Julie Hawkins who puts in so much work outside of what should possibly be expected of her.

A simple thank you to the members of the Planning Committee would not suffice for all the work they do in preparing for our meetings because as has been eluded to: in Planning, the goalposts have moved continually over the last year, so whether a new member of the committee or an experienced one, it has been an almost vertical learning curve just to keep abreast of all the changes. With the consultation on the new draft National Planning Policy Framework consisting of 5 publications including planning guidance's and reference to Government White Papers, further consultations on the Community Infrastructure Levy and more; the landscape will continue to change. There will be more Town and Parish Planning Training arranged by the Dorset Council's Partnerships and I will be holding in house training also for committee members. Don't worry it will be discussions round a table with tea and biscuits not a lecture with a blackboard.

In closing I would like to state that whether it be Parish, Town, District, County, Unitary, Regional or National... there is nothing more important to any community than "planning" because in definition we are planning the future of our town for generations to come and the weight of the responsibility to "get it right" is immense we cannot revisit our decision 6 months later. And so, with that in mind I give my heartfelt thanks to all the members of the Planning Committee for their dedication and commitment.

Policy and Resources Committee

Chairman: Cllr Su Hunt

The Policy and Resources Committee examines and decides on the financial matters of the council; however, matters must be ratified by the full council. The committee approves monthly payments to suppliers, oversees quarterly income and expenditure, the internal audit, service level agreements, insurance, risk assessments and council policies.

The financial accounting year for the council runs from 1 April to 31 March in line with the government and other public authorities' financial year. In 2018 a precept of £858,194 was agreed for the Financial Year 2019 / 2020.

Gillingham Town Council awards grants annually to charitable and voluntary organisations under statutory provisions and subject to the limits imposed by legislation. In January the committee agreed a revised Grants Policy and the criteria that must be met before a grant can be awarded.

In 2018 the council awarded grants to the following local charities and organisations:

- Blackmore Vale Tourism and Development
- Bones Youth Club
- Citizen Advice - North Dorset
- Dorset Blind Association
- Evolution Trampolining Academy
- Gillingham Area Car Link Scheme
- Gillingham Bowling Club
- Gillingham Carnival Committee
- Gillingham Community Church - Open Door and Link Befriending
- Gillingham Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme
- Gillingham Imperial Silver Band
- Gillingham Town Youth Football Club
- Gillingham Twinning Association
- Gillingham Youth Foundation
- Hipp!!Bones
- Life Education Wessex
- NORDISS
- North Dorset Club for the Visually Impaired
- North Dorset Rugby Football Club
- Read Easy
- RiversMeet (Gillingham Leisure and Community Trust)
- Wessex Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre

The Town Council will advertise locally from the 1st of April requesting grant applications are returned by the 31st of July. All applicants must complete an application form, submit annual accounts and provide a brief account of why a grant is required. Applications will be scrutinised before an award is made.

We have power to provide and maintain public clocks with in the parish under the Parish Councils Act 1975 s.2 and the town council this year provided funding for the parish clocks at St Mary's and also at St Simon and St Jude.

As part of a staff re-organisation the council welcomed a new Financial Responsible Officer, Ms Debra Edwards, who joined the council in December. Debra has extensive financial experience gained in both local government and charities and is a fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.

Gillingham Town Council will be working in partnership with Dorset Council to continue services and help to provide best value for money. Cooperation between the new Dorset Council and the town council has never been so essential. With the budgetary challenges facing the new unitary, it is even more important to use local councils as a way of connecting with individual communities. Devolution is an issue which requires resources and co-operation and this has been accounted for in the town council's precept for 2019 / 2020.

Each year the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and the Council's Code of Conduct are reviewed along with other policy and procedural documents including audit procedures, risk management, and data protection (GDPR and CCTV monitoring regulations). New policies are written, such as the Pay Policy and a Training Policy. A Mayor's handbook was agreed this year which will be an invaluable resource for future mayors.

As the responsibilities of the town council grows it has been prudent to seek advice for complex issues such as Employment Law, Health and Safety and Data Protection. A large task completed recently was carrying out staff performance and development reviews prior to reviewing all staff contracts and job descriptions. I am pleased to report that we have a skilled and committed workforce to be proud of.

This year the Policy and Resources Committee has awarded Freedom of the Town to five recipients and a new honours board was made and installed by a member of staff. A Long Service Award was agreed and a cheque of £150 presented to the former Town Clerk, Sylvia Dobie, for 30 years of continuous service.

A great deal of this work could not be achieved without the hard work and continued support of all the staff and I would like to give my sincere thanks to the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, RFO and the Works Manager for all their help and guidance.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the Policy and Resources Committee and especially my Deputy Chairman, Cllr Paul Harris, for all their hard work and continued support.

Working Parties

At the current time there is only one working party that falls under the remit of the Policy and Resources Committee.

1. Cycleway / Footpath Working Party

This working party is primarily lead by members of the Walkers Are Welcome Group and the Ramblers Association with a councillor representation from both Gillingham Town Council and Motcombe Parish Council. The group is working towards providing a safe walking route for all from Motcombe to Gillingham. A small amount of progress has been made this year with the route from Gillingham.



Welcome to The Annual Town Assembly

General Purposes Committee Report Chairman – Cllr Belinda Ridout

The General Purposes Committee is the
'workhorse of the Council'.

It oversees all the work that is carried
throughout the Parish of Gillingham.

Town Council Property

Town Hall Workshops Community Office
Public Toilets Cemetery Chapel Old Mortuary Building



28 hectares (71 acres) of public open space.

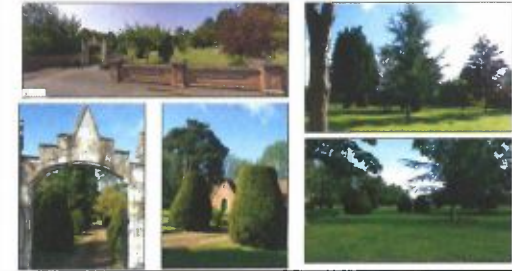


The Town Council is responsible for Gillingham Cemetery

4,500 Burials including War Graves



The Town Council is responsible for The Garden of Remembrance



The council maintain the closed churchyard of the
Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin



The council is responsible for 47 Allotment Plots



The town council is responsible for 16 play areas.
In 2018 a play inspection software app was purchased.
This will be hugely beneficial for the efficient monitoring and recording of
play equipment repairs, and will reduce paperwork and precious staff time

The refurbishment of Hardings Park has been a great success and has become a very popular
destination for all ages. This year the Marlott Road play area (Peacemash)
has been the focus of attention for a much needed complete overhaul

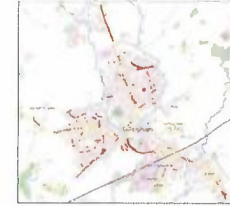
We always consider the provision of inclusive play equipment



For health and wellbeing two Green Gyms have been provided



We maintain 2.68 hectares (6.60 acres) of grassed roadside verges on behalf of the Highways Authority.



We design, plant and maintain the flower beds in and around the town.



Many of the flowers are grown from seed in our greenhouses

Thanks to sponsorship from local businesses and organisations we are able to produce award-winning displays



In 2018 the first three-tier self-watering planter was installed at Newbury thanks to a local company, South West Packaging

The Town Council's Pollinator Action Policy has gone from strength to strength.



The 'Gillingham Love Where You Live' logo has been another great success. The logo can be clearly seen on hi-viz jackets available to the many volunteers that work hard to make our town an even better place in which to live



The General Purposes Committee acts as a liaison between the Town Council and the Highways Authority for all local road and traffic related issues



The council now fund an outreach youth work project which has proved successful in reaching young people.



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The General Purposes Committee oversees the responsibility for over 650 significant trees



Since 2012 Gillingham Town Council has planted 789 trees



With thanks to Gillingham Action for Nature Group and all the volunteers

Over the past year the committee has responded swiftly to complaints regarding dog fouling



CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR DOG
MAXIMUM PENALTY £1000
Gillingham Town Council



At the beginning of 2019 North Dorset District Council granted funding for the town's 'Gateways Project'.



A new working party was formed with members taking on five identified 'gateway' projects, all aimed at visually improving the main entrances to our town with links to the town's heritage.

The Town Council continues to financially support the CCTV system in the town.

There is a maintenance contract in place and the older cameras are gradually being replaced with more advanced technology.



A year of challenges and celebrations

The prolonged drought of 2018 brought additional challenges



Large cracks opened up in the clay soil, potentially damaging young tree roots. Daily watering was necessary.

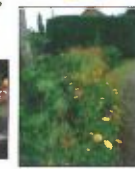


Fencing, benches and seats were all affected. Remedial work to close cracks was ongoing.

Newly purchased self-watering hanging baskets significantly cut down on watering time.



In 2018 Gillingham Town Council was awarded a DEFRA Bees Needs Award for It's Pollinator Pledge and Action Plan



In 2018 Gillingham was awarded a Britain in Bloom Gold Pennant Award

In February 2019 The Town Council was awarded 5 Stars for the Pride in Parks Awards.



With thanks to the commitment of all our staff, but particularly our grounds team. Their skills and knowledge of grounds maintenance is an asset to the Town.

Thank you to everyone involved with the Festive Lights Event



Extra for providing a stage
Dorset Marshalls
Gillingham Community Choir
Gillingham Imperial Silver Band
Local schools, nurseries and youth groups
Town Council staff

And our Sponsors:
• Ade Signs
• Dorset Hire
• Fairfield's
• Gillingham Chamber of Trade and Commerce
• Howell Landscaping
• Kingmore
• Neals Yards
• Peacemash Garage
• Statton Road Garage



With thanks to the Working Parties:

- Allotment and Burials
- Estate Management
- Festive Lighting
- High Street Facilities
- Traffic Management
- Town Seating and Planted Areas
- Health & Safety Working Party
- CCTV

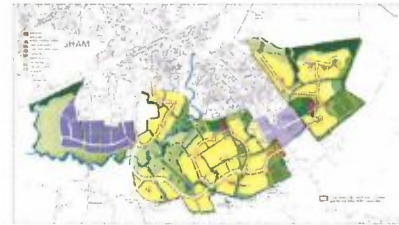
Thank you

Thanks also to GANG, Gillingham Litter Pickers, all members of the General Purposes Committee, the Committee Clerk, the Works Manager and the Grounds Team for their dedication and commitment throughout the year. It has been a very busy but very fulfilling year.

The Planning Committee Chairman – Cllr David Walsh

- Gillingham Town Council Planning Committee consists of eleven town councillors.
- Meetings are held twice a month and members of the public are encouraged to, and often attend.
- North Dorset District Council are the Local Planning Authority and decide if an application should be granted or refused. This must be in line with national and local policy.
- Gillingham Town Council Planning Committee lead the way in Dorset as one of the first town councils to go completely paperless.

In February 2019 Outline Planning for the Extension to Gillingham was agreed by the District Council after having been recommended for approval by the Town's Planning Committee.



In February 2019 the District Council considered the application for 50 houses on Land East of Barnaby Mead.

Although outline planning permission has been granted, the final details through the reserved matters application were contentious and consequently many residents have addressed the council. There will be development on the site as outline consent has been granted but we want to make sure that it is the best development that we can have, one that has a sensitive transition.



The applications considered by the committee over the past twelve months have been varied and include:

- new dwellings
- extensions
- agricultural buildings
- work to listed buildings and those in a conservation area,
- applications for advertisement consent,
- applications for changes of use, and
- applications for larger developments south of the town

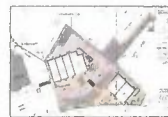
The past twelve months has seen a good standard of applications, with creative and innovative proposals being submitted

The committee has also been consulted on the Draft of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Waste Plan and the North Dorset Local Plan Review Issues and Options Consultation.

It has been reassuring to see that businesses wish to invest in our town and applications have been submitted which will enhance the town and provide additional business and retail opportunities.



Thangrove Garden Centre



Harwood Retail Centre

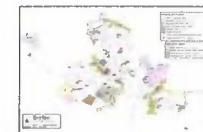


Chantry House Nursery

Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan

The Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan was officially 'made' by North Dorset District Council on 27 July 2018

Following a majority 'yes' vote in the referendum, the decision was taken to make the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan part of the development plan for the Gillingham neighbourhood area



With thanks to the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Group

...there is nothing more important to any community than "planning" because in definition we are planning the future of our town for generations to come and the weight of the responsibility to "get it right" is immense we cannot revisit our decision 6 months later. And so, with that in mind I give my heartfelt thanks to all the members of the Planning Committee for their dedication and commitment.

*Cllr David Walsh
Chairman*

With thanks to:

- Cllr Mrs Val Potheary, Deputy Chairman
- Cllr Alan Frith for operating all our IT equipment
- Members of the Planning Committee
- Members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group
- Members of the Conservation Area Working Party
- Mr Ben Drew, Volunteer Tree Warden
- Mrs Sheila Messer, Rights of Way Liaison Officer
- Mrs Julie Hawkins, Planning Committee Clerk

Thank you

Policy and Resources Committee Chairman – Cllr Mrs Su Hunt

- The Policy and Resources Committee consists of eleven town councillors.
- The Committee manages the council's activities and finances throughout the year and ensures that they are carried out within budget.
- The Committee reviews and sets policies which are then adopted by the Full Council.
- A precept of £858,194 was agreed for the Financial Year 2019 / 2020.

In 2018 the council awarded grants to the following local charities and organisations:

- Blackmore Vale Tourism and Development
- Bones Youth Club
- Citizen Advice - North Dorset
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- North Dorset Rugby Football Club
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- RiversMeet (Gillingham Leisure and Community Trust)
- Wessex Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre

- Cooperation between the new Dorset Council and the town council has never been so essential.
- With the budgetary challenges facing the new unitary, it is even more important to use local councils as a way of connecting with individual communities.
- Devolution is an issue which requires resources and cooperation and this has been accounted for in the town council's precept for 2019 / 2020.
- Gillingham Town Council will be working in partnership with Dorset Council to continue services and help to provide best value for money.



The Policy and Resources Committee continue to review and set new council policies.

The committee has reviewed the council's governance and audit procedures, risk management assessment, asset register and insurance portfolio.

As the responsibilities of the town council grows it has been prudent to seek professional advice for complex issues such as Employment Law, Health and Safety and Data Protection (new GDPR regulations).



With thanks to:

- All members of the Policy and Resources Committee
- Cllr Paul Harris, Deputy Chairman
- The Cyclelink Working Party
- The Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk & RFO

Thank you

*Cllr Mrs Su Hunt
Chairman*

Mayor's Report - 2018 / 2019 Cllr Mrs Su Hunt



Supporting local groups, organisations, businesses and schools



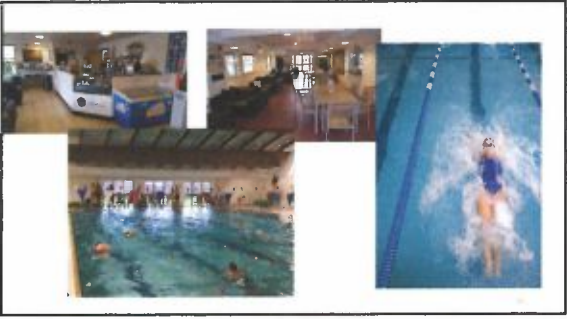
Ceremonial Duties

September 2018
Freedom of the Town Ceremony

Freedom of the Town was awarded to

- Mr Bill Cadman
- Mr John Havill
- Mr David Beaton
- Mr David Lloyd
- Mrs Jean Dory
- Mr Peter Dory





Trustees: Mr A A Baverstock, Mrs S Hunt, Mr B Von-Clemens, Mr M Flanagan

Charity Objects

- *To advance in life and help young people aged 14-24, in North Dorset and the surrounding areas, by providing them with the opportunity to participate in and achieve the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, in order to develop their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as mature and responsible individuals.'*

GILLINGHAM DofE OPEN AWARD CENTRE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED GOLD AWARDS since 2010

- 470 have achieved their award with us
- Records prior to this date are unavailable
- 146 currently taking part
- 98 on expeditions this season
- 22 to Buckingham Palace this year



Training



Crowdfunding

- <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/gillingham-dofe-open-award-centre-relocation?fbclid=IwAR2ubx28VqlrA1hESnZw64It5Czgh-0HD1BPfAep83lox8C0rrRwshBhVA>



Connor and Lewis
at Buckingham Palace



Gillingham Action for Nature Group (GANG)

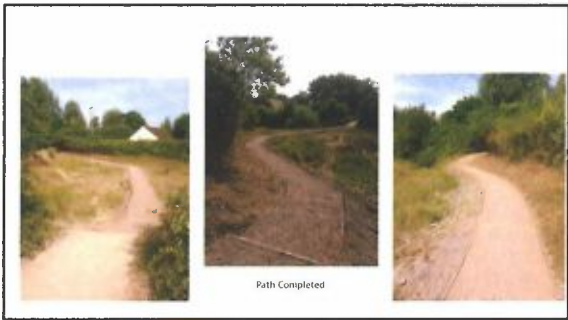


The footpath across
Frog Hollow



Work begins.





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Gillingham

March 2019

Jemma Turner – A&L



The Bus!



New Jem



Outreach Team Lead - Lou



Team Support - Becka



The Gillingham Dream Team



And one last introduction...



Sarah Childs

therendezvous

Thank you!

www.therendezvous.org.uk | 01935 814496
Charity no: 1162722