



TOWN MEETING EDITION

A Message from the Mayor

It has been a huge honour being elected Mayor of Crowborough - A town I have loved since moving here in 2007. I have thoroughly enjoyed my role as a town councillor since I was first elected in 2010 and, with elections in May 2023, it was wonderful to welcome some new councillors to the team.

The role of Mayor has three key components:

First is to chair Full Council Meetings. As a council, we have discussed and made decisions on a large number of topics this year. We have re-committed to being a Fairtrade town, continued to build the town's revised Vision document, established a process to create a new business plan and supported a plan to look at creating a Youth Ambassador Board. We also co-opted additional councillors through two rounds of co-options where the quality of all the candidates were very high.

The second aspect is to represent the town at Civic events. This year I have presented Sewing Crow-Bees with a Civic Award for their outstanding contribution to the town by raising thousands of pounds for good causes, as well as creating some wonderful crochet works around town. It was also a pleasure to hand out nearly 60 Duke of Edinburgh awards to Beacon students, present awards at Friends of Crowborough Hospital AGM, as well as awards at Beacon Academy annual awards ceremony.



Our town has a very active Veterans and Supporters Association, and it was a great honour to be with them at a number of events including Armed Forces Day, Armistice Day, Remembrance Day and the Service of Commemoration at The Bricklayers Arms. It was delightful to open new town council facilities this year such as our new Pocket Park and bike track on Goldsmiths, and other facilities such as Crowborough's Tennis Association's new Padel Tennis court and a commemorative bench on Chapel Green. In August, I enjoyed formally opening the annual Crowborough Hospital Fete and in September, the Crowborough Bonfire and Carnival - both well attended local events. As a council we also organise some excellent events - it was a honour to speak at our Christmas Cracker and read at our Christmas Civic Carol Service, for example. I have enjoyed sharing information about what the council does on two Ashdown Radio interviews and speaking to over 60 primary school children at Ashdown School. I was also delighted to visit Woodland's Care home a couple of times -

the last giving some flowers to resident who had reached the grand age of 107 years old. Please do invite the Mayor to any suitable events you are arranging. Full details can be found on the council's website www.crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk



The third is to raise money for local charities. I am delighted to be supporting the Friends of Crowborough Hospital and 1st Crowborough

A Message from the Mayor continued

Scout Group as the Mayor's charities this year. I hope to support Friends of Crowborough Hospital by raising enough money to purchase some much-needed equipment for their very popular birthing centre - supporting over 600 women every year. Money raised will also support 1st Crowborough Scouts in their work maintaining their headquarters building which over 250 local young people benefit from using every year. I really enjoyed having a small cameo part in the Crowborough Players' wonderful panto "The Three Musketeers" which raised nearly £600. It was also very special being at the 10th anniversary of Pine Grove Pictures where we

raised over £200. Through other initiatives as well, we have raised over £6000 so far this year.

I would like to finish by thanking all the council staff who give so much to the town under the leadership of Caroline Miles, Town Clerk. I would also like to thank my Deputy Mayor, Cllr Natalie Whittle, for her support and attending many events in the service of the town. Every councillor volunteers their time, energy, and skill for the good of Crowborough and I am thankful for their service.

Cllr Matthew Street
Mayor of Crowborough

Allotments and Cemeteries Committee Report

ALLOTMENTS

The committee explored using an area at Owlsbury underneath a pylon and cables for a solar array. Further enquires found that the cost of connectivity to the grid is so high that this is not currently a viable proposition. Hopefully these charges will reduce in the future and the council will look at this again.



It had been agreed to plant a hedge at Herne as part of the Queens Green Canopy, however it was found that this would encroach on plots on the site. It was therefore agreed to plant this hedge at Owlsbury. We then agreed to put in a wire fence along the post and rail fence at Herne to give the plot holders more security.

The committee have decided to hold an Allotment competition in 2024. The categories will be:

- Best Kept Allotment
- Childrens Award
- Ecological Award
- Overall Winner

A £25 National Garden Centre voucher will be awarded for each category. A plaque will be installed at Pine Grove listing the winners as well as a plaque placed on each winning plot.

The charges for plots for 2025/2026 have been set:

- Half plot at Owlsbury £20
- Extra large plots at Owlsbury £160
- Standard plots on all sites £40

As previous years those receiving certain benefits will be given a reduction.

CEMETERIES

Sadly, there have been a number of cases of vandalism at Herne this year. This has resulted in the chapel doors having to be replaced and an alarm system installed.



Summersales Cemetery is progressing well with the contemplation building nearing completion. An interpretation board for the site has been commissioned along with curved benches for

the children's area. The committee decided to hold a competition to produce a sculpture which will be central to this Children's area. We expect to officially open this site later this year.

I would like to thank the Deputy Clerk for her

work with the committee and the grounds staff for their work in making sure that all our sites are maintained and looking their best.

Cllr Kay Moss

Chairperson, Allotments & Cemeteries Committee

Communications and Events Committee Report

Despite the weather trying everything possible to disrupt the Crowborough Town Council's events over the past year, through the combined efforts of the Council's Staff, the list of events survived entirely intact and in most cases almost as they were planned. I should therefore like to begin this report by thanking all those concerned for continuously going that extra mile, whatever the conditions.

KING'S CORONATION

Based loosely on the format of the successful CrowFest 2022 event, the 6th May 2023 started in heavy rain which seemed to get heavier as the day went on. Thankfully our entertainers were well protected during their performances on stage or within the large marquee. It was therefore remarkable how many members of the public continued to turn up throughout the day. It was a particularly good turn out to hear the Choir of Sir Henry Fermor School taking part in the opening performance, even though there was no shelter immediately in front of the stage. As the event continued, even the grass under the protection of the marquee turned to mud, and yet people still turned up with their picnic baskets to share hospitality on the long table provided, whilst watching the children's entertainment, including a traditional Punch and Judy Show. It was still raining when the last act appeared (an excellent duo doing some well-known standards), and it only seemed to brighten up a little bit (ironically) for the fireworks display at the end. It was at this point that I noticed that the chair I had been sitting on in the marquee had been slowly sinking into the ground. My apologies to whoever had to dig it out.

SUMMER FAIR

For the Summer Fair on 15th July 2023 it was

decided to use the Eridge Field, which runs alongside the Goldsmiths car park. In the days leading up to the event, the weather forecasters started warning about the possibility of strong & disruptive winds in the South, and by Friday morning, it became clear that the warnings would need to be taken seriously. Accordingly, it was decided that the main marquee, bouncy castles and gazebos should not be erected on the day (interestingly, the Goodwood Festival of Speed organisers decided to cancel their event entirely). Whilst these changes meant a reduced programme, it still left a sizable number of attractions available, including the main event of the opening by the Mayor of the new Pump Cycle Track and exhibition cyclists. On the day, the very high winds remained on the South Coast, and it was particularly pleasing to see many of the stallholders (minus their gazebos) arriving in vans and treating the Summer Fair like a car boot sale. Plans are now being drawn up to improve the Eridge Field so it may become the event field it was originally intended to be.

FIREWORK DISPLAY

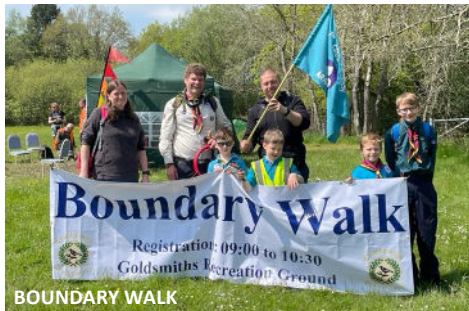
Following the disappointment of having to cancel the November 2022 Fireworks Display due to an under water public area, it was with some relief that despite more rain, the battle was won to hold the event planned for 4th November 2023. The Staff were determined it would go ahead and with the use of tarpaulin, pallets, and specialist machinery they triumphed against seemingly ceaseless days of rain. Even more remarkable the rain actually stopped for 20 minutes during the display, and then immediately returned at the end. The Firework Display also marked the return of a traditional Beacon.

Continued on next page...

Communication and Events Committee Report continued

OTHER EVENTS

The “Christmas Cracker” was cold but dry, and unbelievably well attended and this year’s Christmas Lights were very well received. The Boundary Walk has continued with its staggered start begun during COVID-19 restrictions and this year participants were asked to bring their own water, to help the Town Council meet its target on plastic waste. Sussex Day continues to be developed as an event and both Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday, falling at the weekend attracted bumper crowds at Chapel Green. The Civic Carol Service on 7th December 2023 at All Saints Church is now so popular that late arrivals had to stand at the back.



2024 EVENTS PROGRAMME

The big news for 2024 is the return of CrowFest.

The original event in 2022 was only supposed to be a one-off event, to see off the end of COVID-19, but with about 10,000 people in attendance over the two-day event and large support for something similar, the Council has decided in 2024 to arrange what is being billed as a mini-CrowFest. Don’t be fooled by the title mini-CrowFest. It will only be mini in that it is being held on the one day as an alternative to the Summer Fair.

A great programme is promised, as is with the rest of the 2024 events programme, scheduled as follows:

- 24th April - Town Meeting
- 5th May - Boundary Walk
- 6th June - D Day 80th Year Commemoration
- 16th June - Sussex Day
- 29th June - Armed Forces Day
- 13th July - Mini-CrowFest
- 5th November - Firework Night
- 10th November - Remembrance Sunday
- 11th November - Armistice Day
- 29th November - Christmas Cracker
- 5th December - Civic Carol Service

Cllr Martyn Garrett

Chairperson, Communication & Events Committee

Environment Committee Report

I was honoured to take over as Chair of the Environment Committee after the elections in May 2023. The committee is responsible for two nature reserves and three other amenity areas, managed by our Warden and ground staff. It also has responsibility for street furniture (bus stops, signs and bins), transport, CCTV, street lighting and our beautiful year-round floral displays.

The grass verges are normally cut twice a year and we continue to liaise with the county council to request the cuts are made earlier in the year. Some areas are intentionally left to encourage biodiversity, a balance with the need to maintain visibility on junctions is mostly achieved.

Hard work restoring the ground of the Pocket

Park resulted in this being opened this spring, a beautiful haven for birds and wildlife. This adds to Bluebell Wood, Palesgate Lane meadow and the Country Park and The Ghyll nature reserves.

The Climate Change Policy was adopted and has been fully implemented affecting most of the council’s activities. The opportunities for solar panels and air source heating are being actively progressed.

Concerns about the amount of E.coli that had been found in all our Crowborough streams had been raised with Southern Water, they have plans for upgrade, but timescales are very long.

The council is also in the process of converting

Environment Committee Report continued

the public bins to dual bins to increase recycling.

During the year the committee has also been reviewing and discussing CCTV in the town.

The Council continues to support Wealdlink which provides a valuable service to neighbouring villages and a personal shopping service for the community.

The committee confirmed its support of a 20mph speed limit across the town, with the exception of the A26. At the present time this

item will not be moving forward but will be reviewed annually. The proposed closure of the train station ticket office was not implemented because of considerable opposition from the public and interested bodies.

A successful year and I'm grateful for all the contributions of fellow Councillors and the hard work of the Towns Officers.

Cllr Martyn Garrett
Environment Committee

Finance and General Purposes Committee Report

The Financial and General Purposes Committee is responsible for:

- The corporate management of the Council and administrative services including accounting services, audit, accommodation, legal services and servicing of loans
- The Council's Standing Orders, financial procedures and risk management
- The democratic representation of the Council including elections, members' allowances and the Mayors Fund

During 2023/2024 the Committee workplan included

POLICIES REVIEWED

- Freedom of Information Policy
- Publication Scheme Policy
- Financial Regulations
- Investment Policy
- Document Retention Policy
- Grant Awarding Policy
- Members Allowances Policy

FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNANCE

- Bi-monthly review and noting of income and expenditure and earmarked reserves
- Review of payroll provider
- AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return approval recommended to Full Council
- Reviewed and noted the internal auditors reports. These highlighted no significant

control issues at the Council

- Reviewed and noted the external auditors report. This highlighted no significant accounting or control issues at the Council
- Engaged a VAT consultant to provide best advice with regard to the construction of the new Wolfe Pavilion
- Reviewed and noted the Councils loan position with the PWLB (Public Works Loan Board)
- Recommended Precept to Full Council. A 5% increase to £1678041, representing an additional £8.96 for a band D property

ASSET UPGRADES

- Agreed to purchase asset inventory software
- Agreed to move to a cloud-based server and purchase tablets for Councillors to use

GRANT FUNDING AND SLA'S (SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS)

- SLA's to Clued up and CAB of £25k each with 3-year rolling agreement were approved
- Many local organisations received Council grant funding to support projects with Crowborough

OTHER

- Agreed insurance renewal
- Agreed a new investment into the CCLA. This provides a far higher return to the Council than can be achieved through bank deposit

accounts or money market deposits

utilities costs

BASEPOINT

- The Council is now receiving a quarterly profit share of £25k-£30k. This is in addition to quarterly rental of £15k and the recharge of

Thank you to the work of the Committee, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer during 2023/2024

*Cllr Neil Waller - Chairperson,
Finance and General Purposes Committee*

Planning and Development Committee Report

2023-2024 has been another challenging year for the Planning Committee as the volume of applications has remained at a high level despite the difficult economic climate.

The most pressing issue in planning locally remains a lack of an up-to-date, district-wide Local Plan for Wealden. The draft version of the new plan has now been published following the change in administration at the district council last spring, but it is still some way off being implemented as there are a number of legal hurdles and tests that it still needs to satisfy before it can be relied upon. This coupled with a lack of a 5-year housing supply leaves the whole district, including Crowborough, vulnerable. The number of developable locations within the town for larger numbers of houses appears on the face of it to be more limited going forward due to the developments which have already been approved but in recent years a number of locations have been unexpectedly approved.

Furthermore, unless national policy is to change it is likely that Crowborough will continue to see more houses being constructed for the foreseeable future. It remains to be seen what effect, if any, the pending general election may have on housing and/or planning policy. The town council will continue to oppose development that we do not feel is in Crowborough's best interests and seek to mitigate as best as we can, the effects of any such development that are subsequently approved in site of opposition.

Whilst new larger developments have not been as numerous in the last twelve months there has been a sizable number of small but still multi-property applications that are complex to deal

with and are often unpopular with neighbours due to the fact that they often seek to replace a single older property with multiple houses on the same plot. Resubmissions of previously rejected applications without any meaningful revisions remain a source of frustration for both the committee and affected residents creating ongoing uncertainty for those involved. On a more positive note there is to be development taking place on the Farningham Road industrial estate of extra commercial units proving more business and employment opportunities on land that would not be suitable for alternative use.

Staff shortages at the district council planning department has been causing a number of issues, not least, planning enforcement. There is nothing directly that the town council can do to address this which is unfortunate as it is leading to a number of problems for those living near developments in progress where planning conditions are not being enforced. The staffing situation has improved however in the last year and is now heading in the right direction. The town council will continue to report to planning enforcement any suspected breaches of planning control.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the committee for their diligence and the invaluable support from the town hall staff, especially as this is the committee that meets by far the most frequently.

*Cllr Richard Jury
Chairman, Planning and Development Committee*

Sports and Recreation Committee Report

JARVIS BROOK RECREATION GROUND

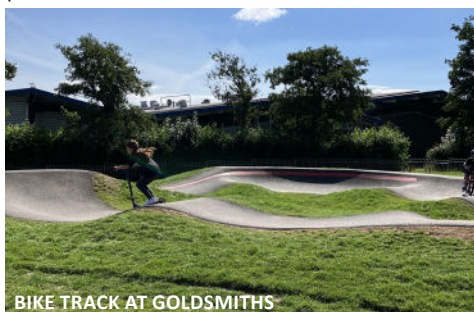
We have agreed to re-negotiate the lease of the recreation ground with Wealden District Council to take account of Artytime wishing to extend their scrapstore building.

We have agreed to allow Wealden District Council to hold Our Parks free exercise classes at the recreation ground. The classes are for all abilities and are delivered by a qualified instructor every Monday and Thursday at 9.30am.

The Council agreed to use £100,000 CiL funds to refurbish the playground. Tenders were reviewed in January and a design was chosen. We are delighted that work on the new playground will start in the next few months, and it is hoped it will be ready to for use this summer.

GOLDSMITHS RECREATION GROUND

The Bike Track project was finally completed and has proved to be a great success with the young bike and scooter riders of the town. We have also now installed picnic tables in this area following a request from a member of the public.



BIKE TRACK AT GOLDSMITHS

We supported the Crowborough Rotary Club with their “End Polio Now” initiative, allowing them to plant crocus bulbs on the bank adjacent to the miniature railway and to install a plaque.

WOLFE RECREATION GROUND

We are still exploring different options to replace the Pavilion at Wolfe. £400,000 of CiL money has been earmarked towards this project

by the Council.

After a bench donated by the Crowborough Lions was vandalised, our grounds staff spent time repairing it and reinstalled it, however sadly this was then stolen.

We have refurbished the works yard and staff accommodation at Wolfe ensuring our grounds staff have up to date facilities.

ALDERBROOK PLAYING FIELDS

We agreed to amend the lease with Crowborough Athletic Football Club to allow them to sublet the football pitches for football base activities.

LIME KILN FOOTBALL PITCHES

We agreed to Jarvis Brook Football Club’s request for them to erect a chain link fence along the forest boundary of pitches 2 and 3.

JUNIOR FOOTBALL

The Council have entered an agreement with the Football Foundation for funding to improve our junior football pitches.

CHAPEL GREEN

The Crowborough and District Veteran and Supporters Association (CDVSA) approached the council to ask if they could fund a bench to be installed at Chapel Green in memory of RAF pilot Donald James Catt who died crashing into the house known as Cranford on Chapel Green, Miss Ella Coomber who was the maid companion of the house and Neville Stone BEM a long time member of the Royal British Legion and CDVSA. The bench has recently been installed and a presentation ceremony held.

As always, a big thank you to our grounds team who keep our sports and recreation grounds looking their best and well maintained, and the office team for their support to the committee.

Cllr Kay Moss

Chairperson, Sports & Recreation Committee

Crowborough Town Councillors (by Ward)




WARD	COUNCILLOR	ADDRESS & EMAIL	PHONE
Central	BUCKLITSCH Peter <i>(Independent)</i>	4 Clock House Court, Beacon Road, TN6 1AF clr.peter.bucklitsch@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk	H 669971
Central	CLARK Jane <i>(Liberal Democrat)</i>	Rocks Farm Cottage, Stone Cross, TN6 3SJ clr.jane.clark@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk	H 655050
Central	STREET Matthew <i>(Conservative)</i>	Westfield Lodge, Hilders Farm Close, TN6 2XJ clr.matthew.street@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk	
Jarvis Brook	PASHLEY Beverly <i>(Independent)</i>	5 Rosehill Gardens, Crowborough Hill, TN6 2ED clr.beverly.pashley@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk	M 07730 400646
Jarvis Brook	RYDER Simon <i>(Independent)</i>	35 Saxonbury Close, Crowborough, TN6 1EA clr.simon.ryder@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk	H 249121
North	GARRETT Martyn <i>(Independent)</i>	65 Millbrook Road, Crowborough, TN6 2SB clr.martyn.garrett@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk	H 661238
North	HEDGES David <i>(Independent)</i>	Peelers, Eridge Road, Crowborough, TN6 2SP clr.david.hedges@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk	H 654810
North	MOSS Kay <i>(Independent)</i>	The Pippins, Eridge Road, TN6 2SY clr.kay.moss@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk	H 654201
St John's	EVERITT Martyn <i>(Green)</i>	34 East Beeches Road, Crowborough, TN6 2AZ clr.martyn.everitt@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk	M 07918 620270
St John's	WHITTLE Natalie <i>(Independent)</i>	Avonbury, Fielden Road, Crowborough, TN6 1TP clr.natalie.whittle@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk	H 655953
South East	DIXON Suzanne <i>(Independent)</i>	Hawthorns, Queens Road, TN6 1QQ clr.suzanne.dixon@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk	M 07875 714096
South East	GODDARD, Paul <i>(Independent)</i>	1 Luxford Cottages, Luxford Lane, TN6 2PE Cllr.paul.goddard@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk	M 07984 160893
South East	JURY Richard <i>(Conservative)</i>	26 Rockington Way, Crowborough, TN6 2NJ clr.richard.jury@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk	M 07827 743343
South West	ARTHUR Alison <i>(Liberal Democrat)</i>	2 The Grove, Crowborough, TN6 1NY clr.alison.arthur@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk	M 07759 965020
South West	PENNEY Alan <i>(Independent)</i>	Sparken Lodge, Mill Drive, TN6 2RR clr.alan.penney@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk	H 662565
South West	WALLER Neil <i>(Conservative)</i>	94 Fermor Way, Crowborough TN6 3BJ clr.neil.waller@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk	H 662435

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