



RAUNDS TOWN COUNCIL

Annual Report of the Town Council

2015-16



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Report from the Town Mayor, Cllr Helen Howell.

It has been a very busy year as Mayor, I have tried my very best to represent our town at many events throughout the district and beyond as possible. As part of my role I chose the firefighters charity to support this past year, I held a Tapas evening back in July of last year with the help of the pupils from Manor School, their barbershop quartet Sepia Tones were fantastic. I also held a Fish and chip supper with "Och N Dough" performing on the night, it was a great success with Steve and his team from Raunds Fish Bar providing a very tasty supper for us all, we also managed to raise more funds by providing a bar on the evening with help from Booze 4 Less providing the drinks at a very reasonable sale or return price.

We had a fabulous turn out for the Remembrance service parade this year, with our MP Tom Pursglove attending, Thanks to David Thoday from the British Legion and all who attended making it the largest afternoon parade in East Northants it was great to open it up so that anyone with military connections were able to join in the parade, as usual we were very lucky with the weather again.



We also had a full room at the Mayors carol service in December, it was great to see so many youngsters getting involved from Park infants, Windmill School and St. Peters School and enjoying the singing. Big thanks to Liz Dunning for leading the service.

This year despite the weather we had a very successful Christmas lights switch on, it was great to showcase the wonderful talents we have here in Raunds by providing home grown entertainment, we now have an events working party set up who are working hard on improving existing events and introducing new ones, if you wish to join our group then please do get in touch, it is great fun and we have people with a wide variety of skills to bring to the table.

2015 was rounded off with a drinks reception for all local businesses to thank them for everything they do to support the town. It was well attended and a really enjoyable evening.



We have also redecorated the council chamber and one other meeting room, we had to do this as we had essential electrical works done. We took this opportunity to bring the chamber back to its former glory and decorations were in keeping with the age of the building being 1871. We think we have done a great job but you are welcome to see for yourselves at any time. Moving on from this we decided that the room could be used to generate revenue for the town so we applied to have the chamber registered as a wedding venue and I am pleased to say that we were successful and are starting to get enquiries, with 2 bookings already made.

In March 2016 I had my Civic service at St Peters Church lead by Reverend Shena Bell, the church was packed. It was a celebration of the good citizens we have here in Raunds. It was an absolute pleasure to award certificates and trophies to residents who were recognised for their contribution and achievements within our community. A big thank you to all who nominated and all the recipients, keep up the good work. Hopefully we can continue to recognise our good citizens in future years.

I held an afternoon tea party for 8 people who had bid for tickets at a charity concert held by The Different Direction Choir and The Raunds Ukulele Band in aid of Cransley Hospice on 1st April, The tickets sold for a total of £128 and I was really pleased to get my sleeves rolled up making sandwiches and cakes for this good cause. I have had some lovely letters of thanks and appreciation and the concert raised £2352.14 in total so I was pleased to do my part.

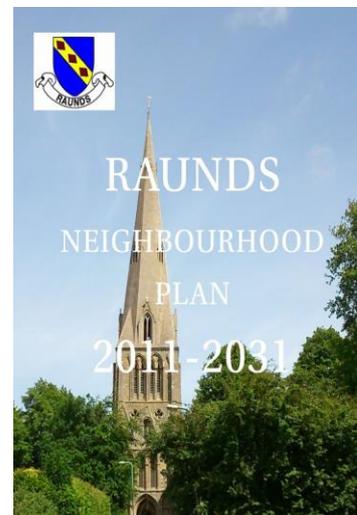


We have had 2 clean ups this year, first the annual clean-up of the cemetery with volunteers from McDonalds. It was the 3rd year that McDonalds have been organising this event and it was an amazing turnout with over 50 volunteers who painted, weeded, dug, planted, scraped, picked and generally did a fantastic job of tidying. A special thank you to Nicci Wride of McDonalds for organising the event. Secondly we did a clean for

the Queen, this was also a great success with many volunteers cleaning the town in readiness for the queen's birthday celebrations.

Raunds Town Council is moving forward in the production of our Neighbourhood Plan, we completed the preliminary consultation stage at the end of 2015. Having analysed the responses the town council have reviewed and strengthened some of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

We now consulting further on certain aspects of the plan. The plan will then be submitted to East Northamptonshire Council who will carry out final consultations and submit the plan for examination. At the end of this process a referendum will be held to determine whether or not local people support the plan. We very much hope that local people see the importance of this plan in supporting the revitalisation of our town centre and in protecting our town from further housing development.



If the referendum supports the plan then our Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of local planning policy and has real importance in the planning process.

Last but not least, we held the inaugural Mayors show on May 1st at Bassfords recreational field or the Rec as it is commonly known. The show started at 12 noon and ran till 6pm, we had an array of stalls, fun and games and live entertainment all afternoon, we raised a considerable amount of money for The



Firefighters charity as well as local groups and organisations. We were pleased to see so many people come along and support the event, I know some of you were there running stalls or volunteering throughout the day and I thank you for that. With its success we will be looking at it becoming a regular event for the town.

It has been a very busy year with these events but I am sure you will agree it has certainly brought this community together. Lets all keep this going!

Thanks for your support.

Cllr Helen Howell
Mayor of Raunds.

Report from Policy and Resources Committee.

2015-16 was a busy year for Policy & Resources with new councillors and a new Chairman.

Immediately we set ourselves challenging objectives for our first year while giving ourselves the opportunity to build a medium term strategy and business plan for the council.

In the short term we have sought to create policies and apply resources to seek to protect our high street and that has included taking real action to protect our retail spaces, threatened by residential development.

We have introduced enhancements to the Hall leases to increase occupancy at the Hall and so revenue for the Council.

We have sought to engage more actively with the community and this is being driven by a new Communication strategy that includes the use of websites, social media as well as print media.

The Council's assets are the town's assets and we have set about a task to list all the pockets of land registered in the Council's name, so that we can create a fully costed asset management plan and decide what we should be keeping and managing.

We are creating a Community Interest company so that we can raise funds for the town by undertaking commercial activities.

In the last 12 months our jewel in the crown has been the creation of the medium term strategy that uses the National Wellbeing definitions to guide our actions and policies. Over time the Council's initiatives will aim to deliver a town that is increasingly desirable as a place to work, rest and play.

Policy & Resources Committee

Report from Chairman of the Finance Committee, Cllr Richard Levell

The Finance Committee was created in May 2015 by hiving off the finance aspects of the Policy & Resource Committee into a separate committee. This was done because P&R had wide-ranging responsibilities and it was considered appropriate, in an age of austerity and squeezing public finances, to have a separate body to focus on financial matters. The new committee was chaired by Councillor Richard Levell, who is a Chartered Accountant, and the deputy chairman was Councillor Lance Jones, who runs his own business.

The Finance Committee's responsibilities are (obviously) mainly financial - that is, making a recommendation to the Full Council on an appropriate level for the Council Tax precept after approving the budgets from the other committees, monitoring the Council's ongoing expenditure to ensure it remains within budget and represents good value for money, and reviewing and checking the Council's procedures for financial control. In addition, the committee has responsibility for the running of the Saxon Hall.

With regard to the Council's finances, I am pleased to report that, after a challenging year just ended, where we inherited a budgeted deficit of £42,000, we have been able to more than halve this to £15,000 for the 2016/17 budget, while increasing the Council Tax by a modest 3%. We should like to have been able to levy a smaller increase, but recent employment legislation with regard to pensions and the National Living Wage have made this difficult. Nevertheless, we are aiming to eliminate the deficit next year, although as George Osborne has discovered, this may be more challenging than we anticipate. Watch this space.

Budget deficits naturally are to be avoided if possible, but, do not worry, the Council does not have to turn to borrowing money, as we have some reserves that were built up over the last decade. However the Council's auditor commented in previous years on the level of reserves held and proposed that the Council review the level of reserves held and not hold excess monies. Last year's deficit and the projected shortfall of revenue this year will be covered by these, and the level of reserves will still remain healthy by this time next year, so in case of emergency, the Council will continue to function.

Turning to the Saxon Hall, while it is a facility for the use of the town, it is important that as far as possible it is self-financing. To achieve this, the Council is not proposing to increase hire charges this year, but instead to increase usage. To this end, the building is being upgraded to make it more attractive to potential users. The Council has received or expects to receive certain grants from, among others, house builders, the intention is to spend some of this money on the Saxon Hall and the garden around it. Ongoing works include the installation of French doors which will lead to a patio area which can be used by all hirers, but may be of particular interest to wedding parties.



Future plans include refurbishment of the kitchens to allow hot food preparation. The intention is to rebuild the reception area and include a key pad access for some of our regular hirers. Together with an aggressive marketing campaign, we are looking to achieve financial break even for the Saxon Hall within the lifetime of the present Council, which is before the next elections in May 2019.

Finance Committee meetings, as with all committee meetings, are open to the public, so if anyone has an interest and would like to find out more, please come along and see what we do.

Cllr Richard Levell.

Chairman Finance Committee

Report from Chairman of the Environment, Leisure and Recreation Committee, Cllr Lee Wilkes.

The Environment, Leisure and Recreation (ELR) Committee has responsibility, in broad terms, for everything that the other Committees do not look after, so issues such as how we can improve and look after Raunds and the town's services and facilities.

Tree Survey:

The Council is responsible for over 400 trees and the associated H&S issues that this incurs. In June 2015 we carried out a triennial tree survey which identified a number of issues which required urgent attention, including the removal of a very large Monterey Cypress tree which stood at the rear of Saxon Hall. The removal of this identified what an underused space the rear of Saxon Hall was and led us to begin the review of this space through our Finance Committee as reported earlier. Other recommended works have been or are being completed in priority order.

Amos Lawrence Entrance:

It rapidly became apparent to the new Council that the entrance to Amos Lawrence required urgent attention as the risk this area posed had previously been brought to the attention of Council in a report dated August 2011. A specification was agreed and quotations rapidly sought and the Council managed to get the area repaired in time for last year's carnival.



Town Square:

It was highlighted that the town square was looking grubby and we therefore arranged for the whole area to be jet-washed in October 2015.

Saxon Hall Play Area:

The release of funding from developers of the old RPC site enabled us to revamp the children's play area at Saxon Hall in December 2015. We've added new equipment and are pleased to see the area being really well used.

Memorial Bench:

Ahead of this year's Remembrance Day services we were happy to install a Memorial Bench in the Memorial Gardens and I'm sure you will all agree that this really enhances the area. The Council were also pleased to see that the War Memorial was listed as part of Heritage England's project to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War.



Children's Cemetery:

The children's area at the cemetery has been marked out with sympathetic fencing to mark the area in a fitting manner.

Cemetery Gates:

The old cemetery gates were damaged and in a poor state of disrepair and were therefore replaced in November 2015. However the original gates have been



retained and will be repaired and re-used in our soon to be created dog park.

Dog Park:

We are creating a temporary dog park on land at the rear of London Road Cemetery. (It is defined as temporary as the land is earmarked for a future cemetery extension when needed). In response to a number of requests the Council felt that a dog park was needed to give dog owners in Raunds somewhere where they could happily excise their dogs off the lead, as all other areas have dog control orders meaning dogs must be kept on a lead.

What this also means is that we will be working with the ENC dog warden to encourage residents to use the new facility once up and running.

We have used the probation service to clear the land free of charge and we now just need to install some secure fencing. We will ensure that everyone knows when the dog park is open.

Service Six Youth Work:

We started detached work in February 2016 through our partners Service Six, a respected youth work provider. We know that there is a lot going on for young people in Raunds, but we are also aware that not everyone takes part in the organised activities we already have. This project is designed to engage with harder to reach young people and those who may simply not enjoy more formal activities. The group moved to the Saxon Hall in March and meets every Wednesday.

CCTV:

The Council have over a number of years built up reserves to renew our CCTV system as it is no longer fit for purpose. We have therefore formed a working party who will be making a recommendation to Council. Already the working party has created a revised specification and are obtaining quotes for this work which will be reported at the next ELR meeting.

Play Areas:

In addition to the improvements at the Saxon Hall play area, we have also costed schemes to improve the Bassfords and Webb Road play areas.

Bassfords:

At Bassfords we are looking at adding younger children's equipment to the existing play area and providing adult gym equipment around the park. We are just waiting for developer funding so that we can move forwards.

Webb Road:

With Webb Road we are looking at a full re-vamp of the area and have successfully obtained a grant for £10,000 from the lottery for this. We are now looking to obtain more competitive quotes for the installation of this equipment.

Skate Park:

The Council are looking at a long term plan for the improvement of the well-used Skate Park facility. It was felt that the previous contractor carrying our repairs was costly so we have found a skilled local contractor to carry out this work at a lower burden to the Council and yourselves as Council tax payers.

Youth Facility:

The Council are in early consultation regarding providing a dedicated youth facility in the town.

We have lots of other ongoing projects. Remember all of our meetings are open to the public and we would love to see you!

Cllr Lee Wilkes**Chairman****Environment, Leisure and Recreation Committee**



Raunds Town Council

Annual Accounts

For

Year Ending 31st March 2016

Introduction to accounts

The accounts of Raunds Town Council have been simplified in an attempt to increase transparency.

Key changes made include:

The income and expenditure account now shows revenue versus the related costs on assets.

The balance sheet has been simplified to make it more accessible

New notes have been added to explain jargon used in the accounts.

A summary shows the movement on reserves to show more clearly the closing position and what has happened during the year.

Other capital reserves are for expenditure on for example modernising and extending the CCTV, further development of Saxon Hall (see separate Finance Report) enhancements to the Square, improving access around the cemetery and replacing windows at The Town Hall.

Raunds Town Council

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2016

	2016 £	2015 £
Income		
Precept (Council Tax)	285,561	277,244
Revenue from Assets		
Saxon Hall Hiring	43,891	43,540
Rents from Offices in the Town Hall	23,212	36,793
Cemetery	6,157	11,316
Market Rents on the Square	3,187	3232
Other Open Spaces	553	480
Other Income		
Sponsorship	1,572	970
Other Income	2,362	11,029
Total Income	366,495	384,604
Expenditure		
Administration	128,753	108,653
Maintenance of Assets		
Saxon Hall	55,643	56,743
Town Hall	43,020	43,148
Grounds Maintenance Contract	58,626	53,039
Public Conveniences	12,655	12,203
Expenditure on other Open Spaces	25,660	47,262
Other Expenditure		
Tourism and Entertainment	14,339	12,353
Repayment of Loan for Saxon Hall	21,618	27,418
Other Expenditure	3,742	1,630
Total Expenditure	364,056	362,449
Surplus for the Year	2,439	22,155

Raunds Town Council

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2016

	Notes	2016 £	2015 £
Assets			
Debtors	1	6,008	25,319
Bank and Cash Balances	2	495,315	386,772
Total Assets		501,323	412,091
 Liabilities			
Creditors		1,260	0
Accruals		1,717	400
Interest on Public Works Loan		0	5,800
Total Liabilities		2,977	6,200
Net Assets		498,346	405891
 Represented by			
Section 106 Reserves	3	93,168	0
Reserves Earmarked for Capital Expenditure	4	178,791	181,943
General Revenue Reserves		226,387	223,948
Total Reserves	6	498,346	405,891

Notes to the Accounts

1) Debtors

	2016	2015
	£	£
Trade debtors	1,029	17,028
VAT	4,979	7,935
	6,008	25,319

2) Bank and Cash Balances

	2016	2015
	£	£
Bank Balances	494,904	386,734
Alto Card*	390	0
Petty Cash	21	38
	495,315	386,772

* The Alto Card is a pre-paid MasterCard.

3) Section 106 Reserves

Section 106 reserves are monies which have been paid to the Town Council by housebuilders / commercial builders carrying out development in the local area. Monies paid are subject to legal agreements and are repayable to developers if the works agreed are not carried out within the agreed timescale.

4) Other Earmarked Capital Reserves

The Town Council holds reserves earmarked for specific capital projects. These include a grant of £10,000 received during the year from the Big Lottery Fund for the redevelopment of the Webb Road play area.

5) Capital Assets

The Town Council, in line with proper accounting practices for local councils, values its capital assets at cost. At 31 March 2016 the Town Council held total capital assets of £3,676,156. This is an increase of £18,230 from 31 March 2015. No capital assets were disposed of during the year.

6) Movement in Reserves

	General Revenue	Section 106	Other Capital	Total
	£	£	£	£
At 31 March 2015	223,948	0	181,943	405,891
Capital receipts		98,246	10,000	108,246
Capital expenditure		(5,078)	(13,152)	(18,230)
Surplus for year	2,439			2,439
At 31 March 2016	226,387	93,168	178,791	498,346

