



Tickhill Town Council

Clerk: Mrs. M. Booker

Electors Meeting Speech April 26th 2022

It seems to have been only yesterday and yet it's approaching a year since I took on the role of chair.

I have to acknowledge the support I've received from John Bergin, my predecessor. He had the knack of making all this appear easy. It isn't, but it's making more sense as the weeks go by

Covid has continued to haunt us throughout the year. In order to combat this we made, and continue to make, use of video conferencing using both Zoom and Microsoft Teams, depending on who we're talking to. We have perfected the art of using these products to table discussion while convening formal meetings with short agendas. The bizarre ten minute meeting in the car park on a cold winters evening simply to approve a pre agreed budget, stands out in my mind. Operationally the council depends on a number of predefined Calendar events along with associated processes and procedures. We have, over the year, reviewed these, updating and refining where appropriate, with a view to introducing the concept of business continuity where possible. We have also looked at the budget structure accruing, where appropriate, cover for future inevitable expenditure. This will address issues such as elements of Pavilion maintenance along with resurfacing the St. Mary's car park, smoothing expenditure peaks and troughs. Planning continues to consume significant time and the effort associated with producing the towns revised neighbourhood plan is significant. Hopefully the final revision will be circulated within the next few weeks before being formally submitted to DMBC. We don't believe there is radical change to the first plan published in 2013, there is however a significant portion of the document devoted to community aspiration. This approach has not been particularly welcomed by DMBC Officers but, as it's one of the few opportunities we, as a community, have to make our wishes known and placed in the public domain, we have persisted with this approach.

Plans are in place to install our first electrical charging points into St Marys car park in a manner which is cost neutral. We also have plans established which will see us launching crowd funding to provide and install a speed camera located on Northgate. Unlike the two existing cameras located on west gate and Sunderland street, these will capture data which we can use to monitor driver behaviour as well as traffic flows. It will also hopefully provide a deterrent to excess speed. We have also applied to participate in a community scheme which would provide us with our own hand held speed cameras for use by community groups. This, unfortunately appears delayed by relevant legal teams which, at best, is frustrating.

Other than this, our relationship with DMBC is perhaps marginally improved. As a community we don't appear to receive the support from the council which we perhaps deserve. The belief appears to persist that Tickhill is an affluent area and not in need of any particular investment. We have been successful in establishing a quarterly Liason meeting with relatively senior managers within DMBC with whom we discuss perceived difficulties. Recent discussions have included the street cleaning associated with the Mill Dam area, concerns over the methods associated with weed control, particularly in hedge bottoms and grass cutting. Traffic volume and behaviour consumes a lot of discussion and progress in addressing these issues is disappointing. Much remains to be done

Whether we like it or not, methods of communication in recent years has changed radically. Covid perhaps brought issues to a head. During the initial stages we started to make use of social media to simply make residents aware of what was going on and associated actions being taken. We have legal requirements which need to be addressed which will continue to see notices physically posted in prominent places within the town centre. Irrespective we have been compelled to acknowledge that communication hasn't been as good as it might be. In order to address this we have retained the services of a local consultant with the brief to improve all aspects of getting our message across to the community. Our web site is being scrutinised and already looks better than it did 3 or 4 months ago. We also acknowledge the need to be proactive in this area. Facebook in particular can and does attract legions of keyboard warriors. Working with them before actions are taken can save a lot of time, effort and stress. A good example is the possible inevitable introduction of car park charging in some form. We can establish the driving force behind the need in the form of DMBC charges along with repair costs along with the various possible solutions. We will therefore beef up our use of social media, Tickhill Today, Parish Magazine along with notice boards.



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Our precept remains amongst the lowest in the Borough. While in many ways this could be deemed admirable, it does leave us with difficulties which we could avoid and perhaps should. While not advocating wholesale change to this philosophy which might be construed as irresponsible, some correction is necessary and we will continue to move the precept towards the regional norm.

While it may be difficult to state that the Pavilion runs at a loss, it struggles to cover its cost. Originally built in 1993 it was designed to provide meeting and changing facilities for Tickhill Football Club. Changes in the way users of the football pitches have been charged, along with costs associated with providing these changing facilities have resulted in the Pavilion becoming under utilised. At the same time it hosts both the Bowling Club and Tennis club along with numerous keep fit type activities. It could however be better utilised and the council have concluded that partial remodelling could and would improve the offering to groups and individual within the town. The current thinking will see us with improved kitchen, toilets etc. along with improved access for all. Two smaller meeting rooms will be provided one primarily being used by the Bowling Club. We have already raised significant contributions from the National Lottery, Duchy of Lancaster and Doncaster Sheffield Airport. Other contributions are being sought. Irrespective we have sufficient to start work and we're currently planning how best to do this. We have in the past few weeks installed audio Video equipment in the main room allowing hirers of the hall to show 4k video or slides on a large screen accompanied by high quality audio.

We've had failures too. We seem unable to produce QR codes which would have accompanied our history boards so this project is effectively on the back burner. We will get to back to this in due course, but in the meantime we are exploring the possibility of working with Carlton Art Society who wish to established a history trail through the town.

None of this is the work of any one individual. The council comprises 9 councillors who give up there time free of charge, attending a monthly meeting along with associated working parties, committees, meetings with third parties as well as work on specific projects. Supporting us in this is the Clerk to the Council who, if nothing else, keeps our activities legal. Our Clerk also undertakes the additional role of Financial Officer, all in all both demanding in terms of time and effort. In recent weeks we have engaged with W M Management Services to enhance our communications. My thanks go to all those mentioned as well as the support coming from Pavilion staff.

We continue to work with the community wherever and when ever we can. We made a significant contribution to the Libraries Community Garden, and look forward to seeing this established

What of the future? We have in the past run a series of community awards. These weren't in good shape before the pandemic, and frankly haven't survived the past few years. We should perhaps review and re-establish where appropriate. We had an Advisory Group also a victim of the Pandemic. Do we re-establish? What's its remit? Many questions to answer. These, together with the ongoing workload guarantee the next year to be both busy and exhilarating.

Peter Walker

Chairman – Mayor
Tickhill Town Council